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HARRY



BLOUNT



BY



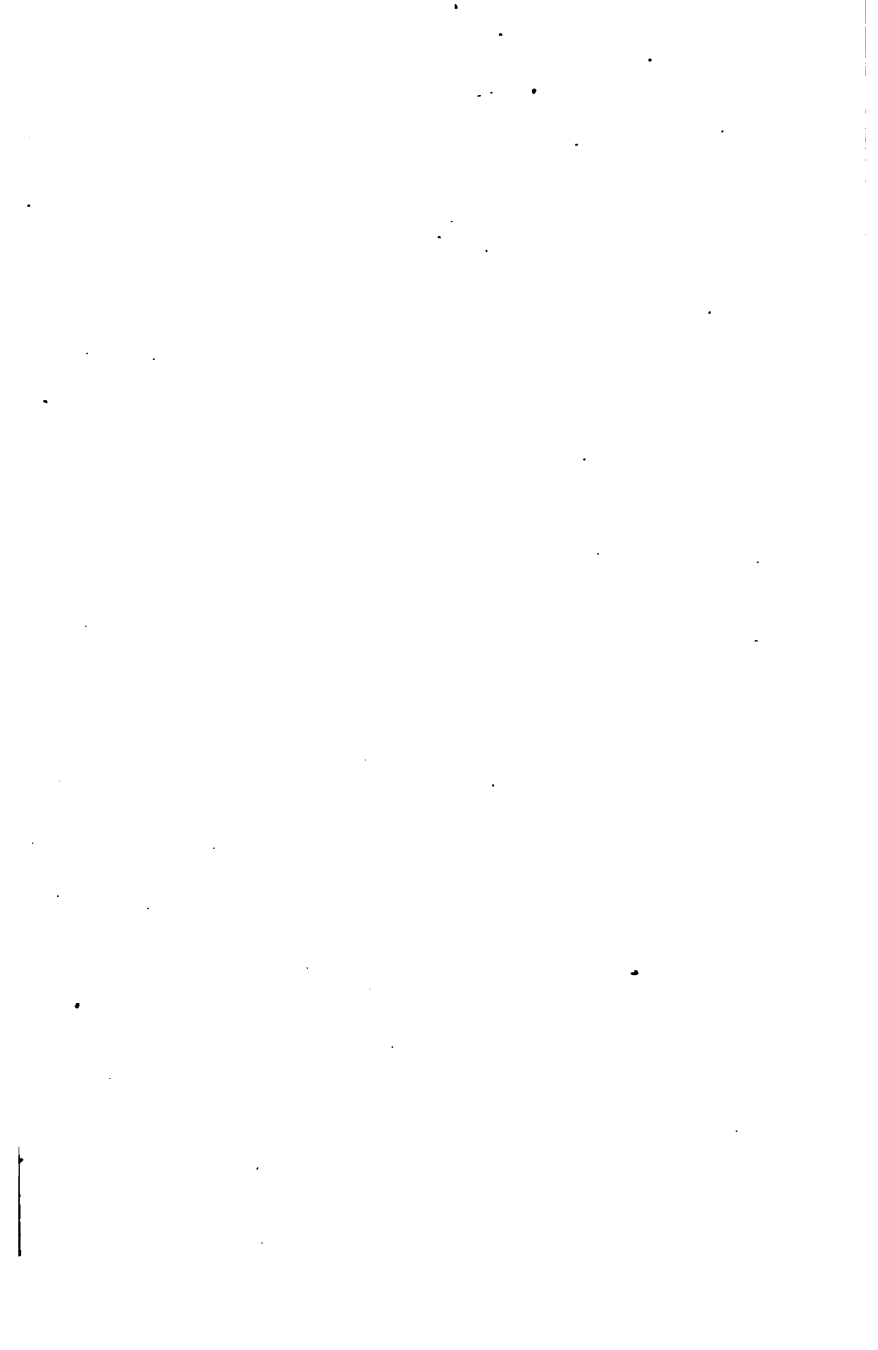
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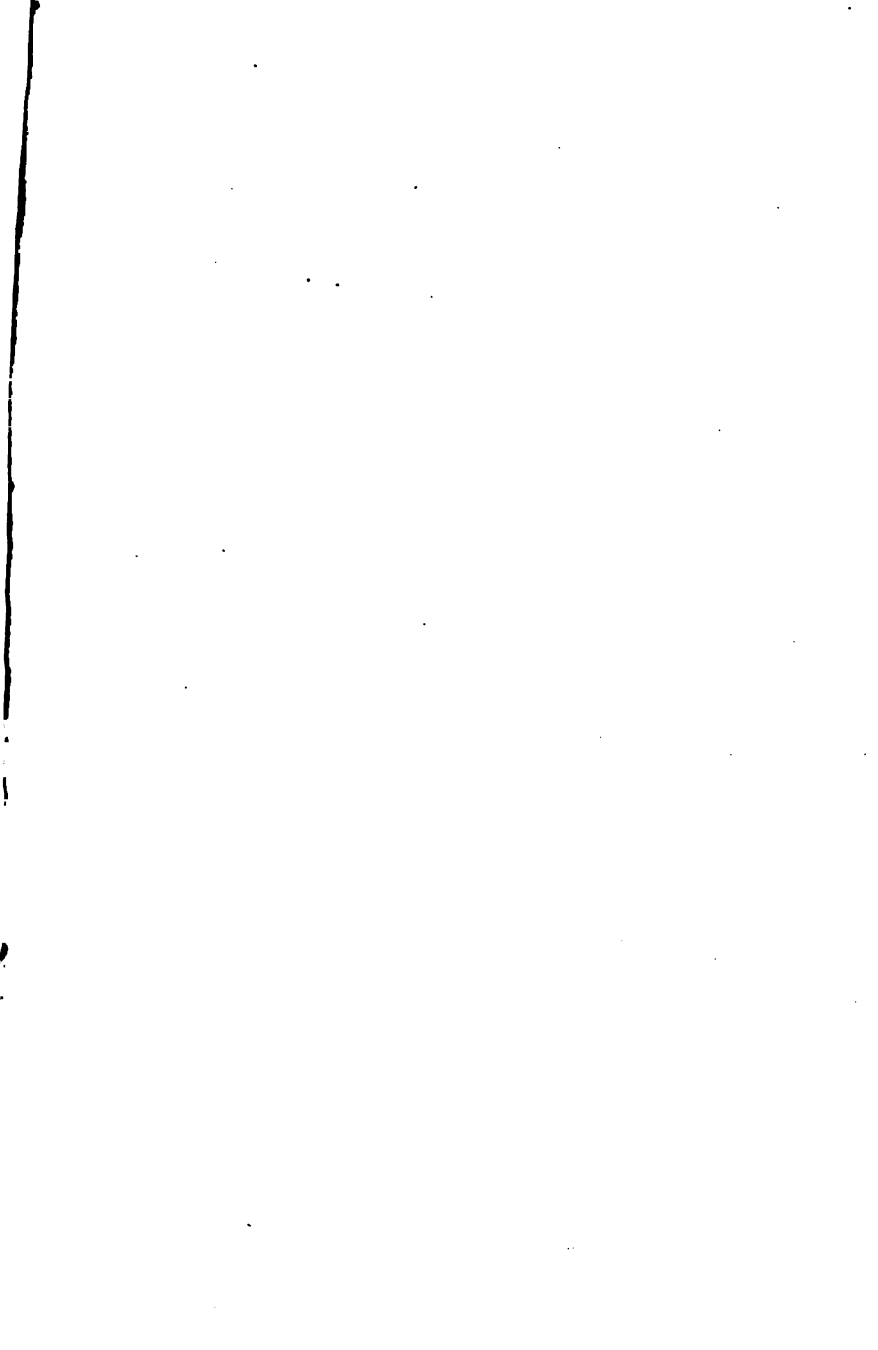


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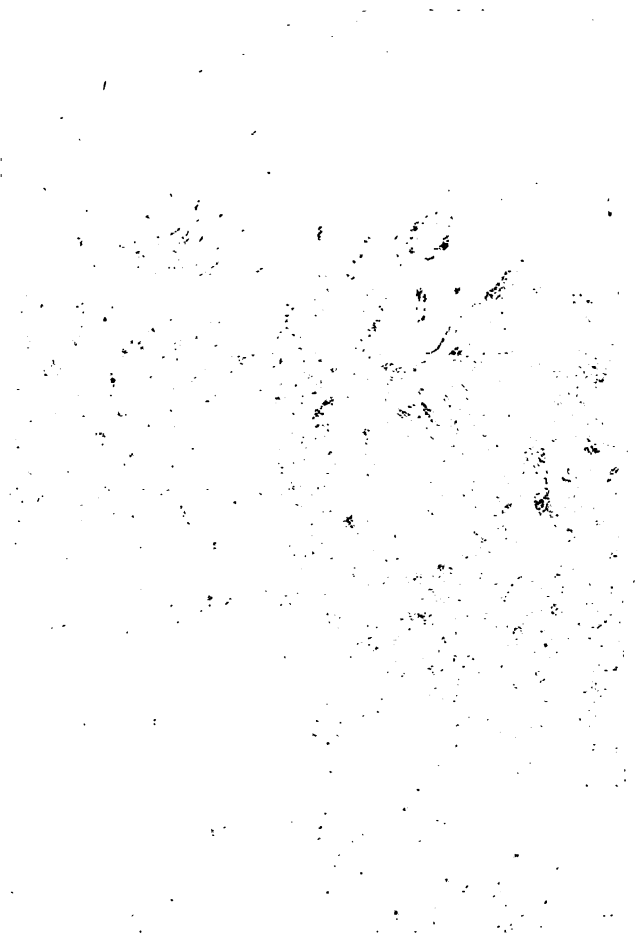


"When Grasshopper got to the brook, he neither leapt too soon, nor swerved to one side or the other, but gave a tremendous leap, such as Harry had never felt in the course of his limited experience."—Page 159.

SEELYE, JACKSON, & HALLIDAY, 211 & F. STREET  
LONDON AND C. XXV.

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# HARRY BLOUNT.

PASSAGES IN A BOY'S LIFE  
ON LAND AND SEA.

BY

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON,

AUTHOR OF "WENDERHOLME," ETC.

SEELEY, JACKSON, & HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET,  
LONDON. MDCCCLXXV.

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251. c. 243.



# CONTENTS.

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CHAPTER	PAGE
I. SKETCH OF A YORKSHIRE SCHOOLMASTER . . .	1
II. SOME ACCOUNT OF BRAMBLEBY SCHOOL . . .	6
III. IN WHICH HARRY SAYS WHAT IS NOT QUITE THE TRUTH, AND AFTERWARDS HARDENS HIMSELF IN HIS ERROR . . . . .	13
IV. EXPERIENCES OF A FAG . . . . .	23
V. THE PUNISHMENT . . . . .	30
VI. A CHANGE OF MASTERS . . . . .	38
VII. OUR HERO LEARNS TO SWIM . . . . .	45
VIII. A NEW-COMER . . . . .	49
IX. HARRY BLOUNT AS A LATIN ESSAYIST . . . .	56
X. MEUM AND TUUM . . . . .	60
XI. ON THE RIVER, AND IN IT . . . . .	67
XII. NEMESIS COMES UP WITH WADE . . . . .	74
XIII. IN THE DOCTOR'S STUDY AND ELSEWHERE . .	81
XIV. CONSEQUENCES OF PRECEDING EVENTS . . .	90
XV. AT HOME AGAIN . . . . .	98
XVI. BILSBURY GRANGE . . . . .	105
XVII. OF WHICH A HORSE IS THE REAL HERO . . .	116
XVIII. SHOOTING ON A SMALL SCALE . . . . .	135
XIX. THE BILSBURY HUNT . . . . .	143

CHAPTER	PAGE
XX. IN WHICH SWALLOW DISAPPEARS FROM THE SCENE	162
XXI. SQUIRE HEALAUGH AT HOME . . . . .	168
XXII. RIFLE PRACTICE . . . . .	173
XXIII. SQUIRE HEALAUGH'S WOMANKIND . . . . .	183
XXIV. A FIRST LESSON IN NAUTICAL MATTERS . . . . .	191
XXIV. AN OLD WOMAN'S HEART . . . . .	209
XXV. IN WHICH OUR HERO EMBARKS . . . . .	214
XXVI. THE SEA! THE SEA! . . . . .	229
XXVII. TO THE ISLES OF THE WEST . . . . .	235
XXVIII. THE ALARIA ARRIVES AT OBAN . . . . .	248
XXIX. A REST IN PORT, AND A FRESH START . . . . .	267
XXX. DR. TEMPLEMAN'S NEW PROSPECTS AND PLANS	284
XXXI. MR. HEALAUGH IS MUCH ASTONISHED . . . . .	295
XXXII. NEWS FROM THE ALARIA . . . . .	302
XXXIII. A DARK TIME COME AGAIN . . . . .	307
XXXIV. HOW IT HAPPENED—AND AFTER . . . . .	312
XXXV. A MEETING ON THE GREAT DEEP . . . . .	330
XXXVI. AT BILSBURY GRANGE AGAIN . . . . .	338
XXXVII. A MORNING CONFERENCE . . . . .	345
XXXVIII. CONCLUSION . . . . .	352

# HARRY BLOUNT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### SKETCH OF A YORKSHIRE SCHOOLMASTER.

THE Rev. Dr. Templeman was considered to be one of the most efficient schoolmasters in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He was Head Master of Brambleby Grammar School, and was very fond of calling himself Head Master, with a capital H and a capital M, in printed circulars and reports in the local newspapers—something in this style:—

“A limited number of pupils are received in the house of the Head Master.”

Or else—

“The higher branches of classical education are under the personal supervision of the Head Master.”

The same persistent Head Mastership appeared, too, on the Doctor's visiting cards, and was engraved on a brass plate on his front door.

In short, Dr. Templeman never neglected an opportunity of making his headship known to all whom it might concern, and he really did succeed in establishing a degree of

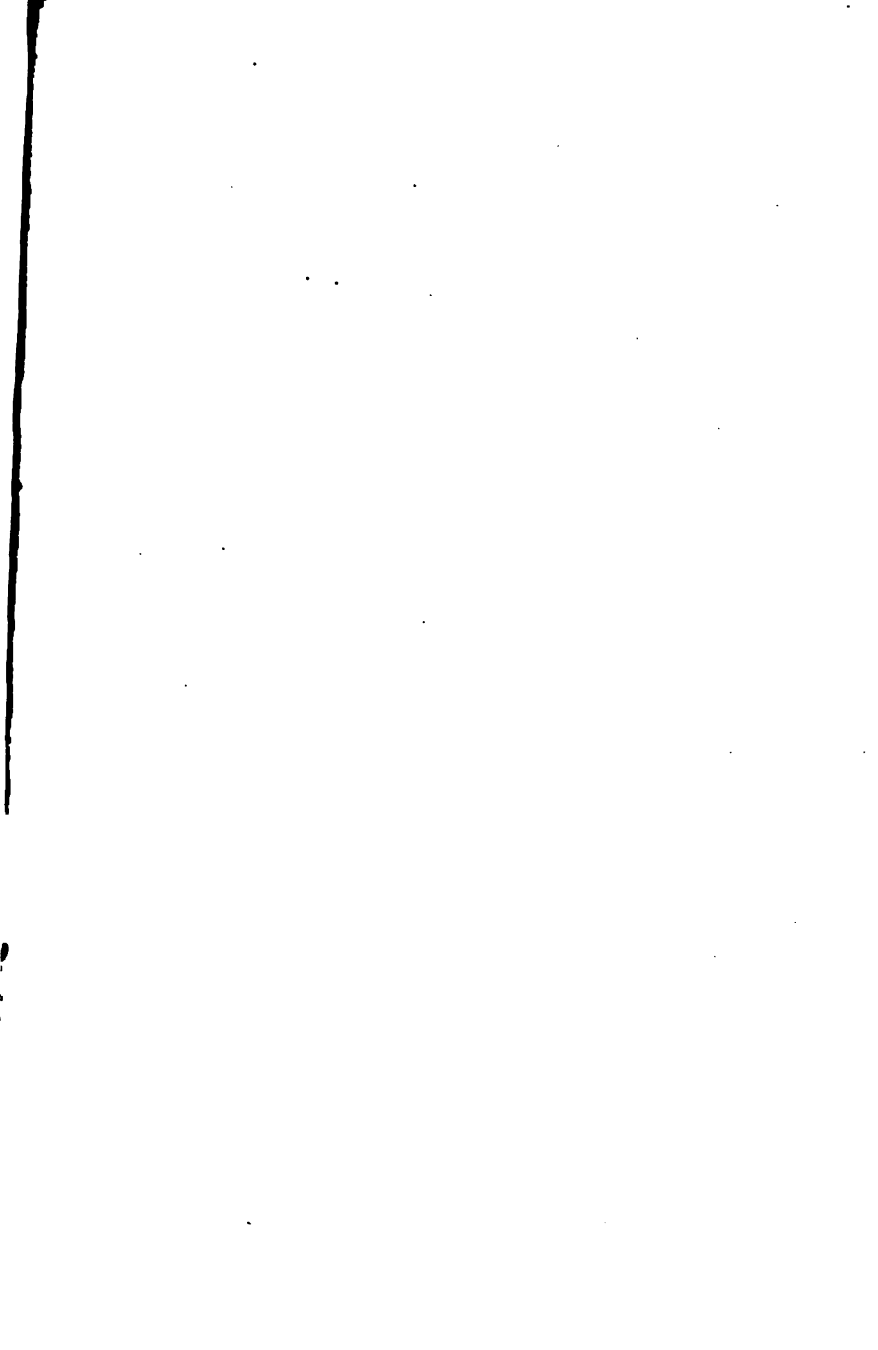
awful respect for himself in the minds of the Brambleby people. His own dwelling, which had nothing particular to distinguish it from others in the same street, but which, if it could have known anything, would have risen with conscious self-respect at least a storey higher than its neighbours, as being the house of the Head Master, was about half-a-mile from the Brambleby Grammar School, and Dr. Templeman's predecessors had always walked this distance, dressed like other folks, or at any rate like other clergymen of the Church of England; but he took care to march along the streets in the full dignity of his gown, and with such a very grand air and manner, that it was hardly possible or decent not to take off your hat to him, and it was plain that he expected as much. It was especially striking to see him on a market-day, when all the folks from the neighbouring country were congregated at Brambleby; for the more spectators there were, the more imposing Dr. Templeman looked, and if, by good luck, there was just a light breath of air, then, indeed, the Doctor was to be seen in all his perfection, for it filled out his robe, and made the skirts flutter, so that he looked like a ship in full sail. As for his personal appearance, it answered capitally to the part he had to play in the little town of Brambleby. Most of the men in that part of Yorkshire are well-built, sturdy-looking fellows; but the Doctor's large face and strong frame, and big muscular fist, showed plainly enough that if he had not been Head Master of the Brambleby School, he might have been just as efficient in a farm, or in the yeomanry cavalry. But wherever he was he would never have been contented with the position of a subordinate, and I am sure that he would rather have been a head gamekeeper than an under-secretary of state.

Brambleby school was very like a tadpole in one thing, for the whole catalogue of its masters was composed of the important Head, and a little thin usher, or Tail-master ; but there was this difference between Brambleby school and a tadpole, that whereas in that creature it is the tail that propels the whole, the Tail-master moved nothing in particular. He was, however, of immense utility to Dr. Templeman in one way, for without him the Doctor would have enjoyed no headship whatever, and been simply the schoolmaster, and no more, which would have been intolerable to his sense of dignity.

Amongst the limited number of pupils received in the Doctor's "House" was a youth called Harry Blount, and when Harry was first sent to school at Brambleby, it was not an hour too soon. Not much is to be said in favour of his previous education, which had been too irregular, and too often interrupted, to be of any great good to him. He had been situated very unfortunately in many respects, though not in all. To begin with, quite in his infancy he had lost both father and mother in a shipwreck, and having neither brother nor sister, would have been dreadfully alone in the world without the care of his grandmother, an excellent old lady, with much good sense, which, however, her too great affection for Harry did not always allow to operate when it would have been most useful. She lived at a place called Bilsbury, and there was a mild, kind old country clergyman at Bilsbury, who took charge of Harry during his tender years, and initiated him into the beginnings of Latin. But Mr. Masham was a great deal too fond of Harry to be severe with him, and besides that, old Mrs. Blount was always interrupting her grandson's studies for one reason or another ; either she wanted to take him to the sea-side, or she wished to visit







## CHAPTER II.

### SOME ACCOUNT OF BRAMBLEBY SCHOOL.

THE town of Brambleby was one of those very clean, quiet, and out-of-the-way Yorkshire towns that seem as if the bustle of modern life would never be able to reach them. The prevailing colours of it were red and green, red for the houses—they had walls and tiles of a vermillion-coloured brick—and green for the fields and orchards all about. Two buildings in the place were gray, the old church and the old castle, and besides this there were three or four comfortable houses all covered over with stucco, and painted cream-colour, and these particularly clean-looking houses belonged for the most part to rich old maids, who seemed to thrive uncommonly well in Brambleby. The town had a mayor, whose chief business was to give a ball once in the year, and just at the season of the mayor's ball the town wore a military aspect in consequence of the yeomanry cavalry, for a squadron met at Brambleby to exercise. I must not forget to add that there was a river, a sleepy river deep enough to be navigable for barges and consequently good for swimming and bathing.

The Grammar School was in the middle of the town, and it and the prison were the two dreariest and ugliest

buildings in all Brambleby. Dr. Templeman's house was not so unpleasant, for the back of it looked upon a large garden with what had once been a lawn but was now turned into a playground for his boarders. At the end of this garden were the outbuildings, which had been intended originally for stabling and coachhouse, but Dr. Templeman found it much more profitable to keep other people's boys than horses of his own, so he had turned the stable into a school-room and the hay-loft into a dormitory, and where horses used to eat hay and corn the boys digested Latin and Greek, with a much less vigorous appetite. As for the food of the body, it was provided in the house itself, and it is only fair to Dr. Templeman to say that it was both plentiful and good. As we come to know the Doctor better we shall see that, although a rather fussy and stuck-up personage in regard to his dignity, he had many very good qualities, and one of the best of these was a spirit of genuine hospitality towards the boys who were entrusted to his care. He had no notion of making a fortune by pinching them in their keep; on the contrary, he liked to see a lad with a good appetite, and there was not a table in all Brambleby better supplied than his was with everything necessary to health and strength, though there were not many useless luxuries.

If having a good appetite could have sufficed to win the Doctor's affection, Harry Blount ought to have been a great favourite from the first. The day he was brought into Brambleby by his grandmother, in a heavy carriage drawn by two horses just taken from the plough, that appetite of his may have suffered a temporary suspension or eclipse, but it was only to shine forth with redoubled splendour two days afterwards, when the pangs of parting with the old lady were no longer felt in all their intensity. It was

a sad day for old Mrs. Blount, and a painful one for her grandson, it must be confessed, but I don't think he ever quite knew the extent of the sacrifice she made, or the effort that it cost his good old grandmother's heart. The twenty-five miles that separated Bilsbury Grange from Brambleby seemed an immense distance to anybody who was condemned to sit in Mrs. Blount's carriage which moved along at a pace very little better than that of a carrier's waggon, though the horses did pretend to do what was apparently a trot; and so whenever she came to the town, she went through the whole excursion in a leisurely manner, and stayed all night at the hotel; that first night Harry stayed also at the Golden Lion, and felt partly pleased and partly miserable. The evening passed pleasantly enough, for the old lady and the lad went together to one of those cream-coloured houses that were inhabited by rich old maids, and these ladies were so very kind, and said so much in favour of Dr. Templeman and the great advance the school had made under his management, that Harry's apprehensions began to subside, and he looked with greater confidence upon the future. But the next morning this pleasant view of things (which had been rendered still pleasanter by two glasses of excellent port wine) gave place to a saddening sense of reality, and when his grandmother took Harry to the house of the Head Master, the young gentleman did not feel quite so courageous as he had anticipated. Still nothing could exceed the paternal gentleness of Dr. Templeman to a pupil on the day of his arrival, and you may be sure that he did not display a certain instrument of torture that usually lay hidden behind a screen in the dining-room.

Harry was thirteen years old at that time, and remarkably behindhand for his age. The Doctor was not long in

finding that out, in fact by the end of ten minutes' friendly conversation, consisting of amiable but pertinent questions and answers as brief as they were timid, he had gauged the depth and the breadth of Master Blount's very imperfect attainments. Then he rang the bell and told the servant to send up Greenfield minor. When Greenfield minor made his appearance the Doctor said in a tone of voice quite different from that he had hitherto assumed with Harry :

"Here is a new boy, who will be a class-fellow of yours ; take him with you and introduce him to the other fellows."

One minute afterwards Harry found himself in the middle of the playground. About a score of lads of the most various sizes crowded round him and said, "What's your name?" Just then a tall fellow with incipient whiskers walked with firm strides into the midst of the group, pushing the others out of the way, and laying a heavy hand on Harry's shoulder. "Leave him to me!" said the tall fellow. Then he ordered Harry to follow him.

Our hero had a confused impression that this must be one of the masters, but in point of fact he was one of Dr. Templeman's private pupils, of whom there were four at that time. These gentlemen paid the Doctor a hundred a year each, and, though they dined with the other boarders, they had rooms of their own, and never set foot either in the Grammar School or the school-room at the end of the garden. Beings of a superior order, they condescended to walk occasionally across the playground, and to exercise great authority over the boys, who did not venture to resist them. Harry followed with some apprehension till he came to a corner of the ground where a garden-seat still

remained, and on this the private pupil enthroned himself, ordering Harry in a gruff voice to stand directly before him. The other lads stood in a group observing the little scene, but from a respectful distance.

The private pupil first stared at Harry with a very stern expression of countenance, and in perfect silence. When he had stared as much as he thought necessary he said with the aspect of an inquisitor, "Who and what are you?"

Harry was embarrassed by the question, and still more by the manner of the speaker, so he hesitated about answering.

"I desire to be informed who and what you are!" repeated his persecutor, in a tone of intense malignity.

"My name is Blount," said Harry.

"I have already the honour of being acquainted with your name, sir; now tell me who and what your father is?"

"My father is dead."

"Oh, dead, is he? Well, was he a tradesman or a gentleman?"

"He was a gentleman-farmer."

"An utterly incompatible combination. Was he a magistrate?"

"I don't know; I don't think he was."

"Of course not. In future, when you describe the station of your parents, you will have the good sense to drop the first of the two words you just now used together. I strongly disapprove of the habit, so prevalent in the middle classes, of calling themselves gentlemen."

Up to the present moment Harry Blount had never troubled himself about his rank in society. He had been perfectly happy in his own station at Bilsbury, and that without the remotest notion of priding himself upon it in any way. But the high-and-mighty tone of this private

pupil galled him considerably, and, for the first time in his life, he wished his father had been a lord. If he had been a lord, however, his present persecutor would not have presented himself in the same light, he would have been as softly insinuating as he was now overbearing. The conversation continued as follows :—

“Who brought you up since your father died?”

“My grandmother.”

“Your grandmother! Do you mean to tell me you have been brought up by your grandmother?”

Harry answered nothing. The contemptuous and insulting tone pained him to the quick, and the thought of old Mrs. Blount, quite alone in her sitting-room at Bilsbury, brought tears into his eyes.

“This youth,” his tormentor continued, addressing the other boys, “is blubbering for his granny. I’ll be granny to him in future. D’ye hear, youngster, look at me! I will be your grandmother! Come and sit on my knee, will you, my own darling?”

Saying these words, the private pupil seized Harry with a grasp of iron, and forced him down upon his knee. The strong hands held him like a vice, and resistance seemed out of the question. At last the agony became unendurable, and Harry, by a sudden and violent effort, disengaged himself. Once free, he made the best use of his legs, and doubled like a hare about the playground; but he was not pursued for long. The private pupil had an intense sense of his own dignity, and knew that he would look ridiculous in running after an uncatchable boy. He therefore retreated majestically to the house, and hearing a tit-tetering behind him, turned round just once, to quell it, with an awful frown.

Greenfield minor then came to Harry, and said, “That’s



Selby ; he's a private pupil and a bully ; better keep out of his way. The other privates are nicer fellows than he is, but we don't see very much of them. You'll be in the same class with me, so come along and I'll show you the place. It isn't much of a place, and we're kept rather close, except when we go to play cricket on the heath."

Boys of Harry's age are not long in forming a friendship, and he soon discovered that he and Greenfield minor were sure to get on very well together. This was a great consolation for the brutal behaviour of Selby, and the next morning, when he awoke in the strange little iron bed in the dormitory, drenched with cold water that had been poured into his ear and inundated the sheets, he heard Greenfield remonstrating energetically against this application of "cold pig."

## CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH HARRY SAYS WHAT IS NOT QUITE THE TRUTH, AND  
AFTERWARDS HARDENS HIMSELF IN HIS ERROR.

THE two principal amusements at Brambleby were those in fashion at places of much higher reputation, namely cricket, and boating. There was a good cricket-ground on the heath, about a mile from Dr. Templeman's house, and the river that ran past Brambleby on its way to the German ocean was a very fairly good river for boating, indeed, practically much better than some larger streams, because it was never crowded either with pleasure craft or barges. The current was even and slow, the water generally deep, and the bridges offered no hindrance to navigation. Dr. Templeman's pupils possessed three boats, as good in their way as need be, for they had been built by a first-rate craftsman at Lambeth, and these boats were carefully kept in a shed by the river-side just as boat-proprietors keep their pleasure-craft by the Thames.

Now, it happened the very day after Harry's arrival, for it was at the close of the midsummer holidays, that between twelve o'clock and dinner-time, the boys went out for a walk and he with them. They very often employed this hour in taking a brisk ramble by the river-side, and did so on the present occasion. When they came to the boat-house, Greenfield minor did the honours of that

interesting place to our hero, and it is difficult to convey any adequate idea of the impression made upon Harry's inexperienced mind by those beautiful and highly-finished craft. Never in his life had he seen boats like those boats. There was a shallow pond at Bilsbury, and on the pond a heavy old tub that would have progressed sideways like a crab, almost as fast as it could follow its own nose, or prow, if the reader wants a more poetical expression, but there was as much difference between that old tub and the beautiful London-built boats at Brambleby as there is between a coal-cart and a countess's private phaeton. The scrupulous care that was evidently taken of these boats enhanced young Blount's opinion of them. They were as clean as a rosewood table in a drawing-room, and carefully suspended out of harm's way.

When Harry's first surprise had a little subsided, and he had examined the boats as well as he could do in their present situation, Greenfield said, "That outrigger belongs to the private pupils, and they go out almost every day when the weather is favourable. The other boats, you observe, are not outriggers, and are a good deal safer; they belong to us young fellows. Any one may subscribe to them. You'll subscribe of course, will you not?"

"I shall be delighted," said Harry, and they walked back to the house to dinner.

"I forgot one thing," Greenfield said as they were walking together; "the Doctor will not allow any of us to go in the boats without being able to swim. I forgot to ask whether you can swim or not."

Now, the exact truth was that Harry Blount could *not* swim, but as that pond at Bilsbury was so shallow that he could always give a kick with his feet against the bottom, he used to practice something which he thought was

rather like swimming but which in reality was only bathing, that is to say he would give two strokes and then a kick at the bottom and so keep his head above water. At the same time, like all very bad swimmers, he was deeply learned in the theory of the art, and had read everything that he could find which in any way related to the subject. He had found the universal book-theory about swimming to be this—that the human body naturally floats in water, and that if only the tyro has courage enough to cast himself into a deep place and presence of mind enough to keep his hands down, at any rate he will not sink, and the very slightest movement of the hands or feet will suffice to keep him above water. This is one of the prettiest theories in the world, and it is quite true that a good swimmer can keep himself afloat by a very slight movement indeed, because he makes it so intelligently and skilfully, but a beginner cannot do it at all. Harry had often been told, too, that if any one were thrown into deep water and had only courage to keep his presence of mind, he must swim without fail, for the deeper the water is the better it sustains you. This also is a popular delusion as it does not signify in the least when a man is out of his depth whether the matter six feet below him is water or earth, the only question that concerns him at all is the specific gravity of the fluid in which his body is actually immersed. However, a boy of Harry's age could not be blamed for readily accepting a foolish unscientific theory which is believed by almost all grown men who are ignorant of science, and his eager desire to have a share in the boating induced him to put faith in anything which would assure him that he was able to swim. He thought in his own mind, "They say the river is very deep, and I have always been told that anybody with good courage who is thrown into deep

water will swim immediately ; now, I'm sure I have courage enough, so I may honestly say that I can swim in deep water though I never did very much in that shallow pond at Bilsbury." This was the way he tried to persuade himself that he could swim, and he very nearly, but not quite, succeeded in doing so. There was still at the bottom of Harry's conscience a little voice, just audible by him, which said, "No, you can't swim really, you can only flounder about, and so you are telling a fib." Harry stifled this small voice as much as he could, and answered it in this way : "Well, if I can't swim I'll risk it, and take a header into the deepest place they can find for me." In a word the young gentleman was resolved to make up in audacity what was deficient in truthfulness, a plan which sometimes succeeds but not always, and which in this instance led to a little scene that was much more amusing to the bystanders than to the hero.

At dinner that very day when they had been to see the boats, Greenfield minor said to Dr. Templeman, "If you please, sir, Blount wants to subscribe to our boat."

"Very well, very well, but can you swim, Blount? I mean really swim well ; few boys of your age in this country can swim well. We are not like the South Sea Islanders, you know, who do it by instinct."

"I can swim, sir."

"Yes, but can you swim *well*? Could you cross our river twice or three times without touching ground?"

Harry saw the pleasant vision of the boat rather receding from him when this question was put in such a positive form. But he had already gone some distance on the road of untruth and thought in his own mind, "If I can swim at all I can cross that river once or twice, it is not so *very* broad." So he answered—

"I think, sir, I could cross the river twice, but I don't know about three times."

The answer was modest in form, and so far as the words went was quite the answer of a lad who really could swim a limited distance, but prudently distrusted his capacity for any greater effort than he had been accustomed to. The words, indeed, could have excited no suspicion, but there was that in Harry's manner which at once convinced not only Dr. Templeman but every one else at that table that the young gentleman was fibbing, and that he could not cross the river twice, nor even once. So the Doctor said with a smile of incredulity, "I think it would be as well to put this young gentleman's swimming powers to the test before he subscribes to the boat. Please see to this, Mr. Barton." At the same instant all eyes were turned upon poor Harry, and he felt very uncomfortable and very red, for everybody was smiling exactly as Dr. Templeman had smiled. It was clear that nobody had the slightest faith in Harry's account of himself as a swimmer.

When they got into the playground Greenfield came to him at once and said, "It's humbug about your swimming, the Doctor saw through it at once, and so did we all. You can't swim, I know you can't. And now just let me give you a bit of advice; just *say* you can't and it will be all right, but if you go on saying you can you'll most likely be drowned, for they'll make you take a header into Mother Beeston's Pool, which is the deepest hole in the river, and you'll never come out alive, for the bank shelves over it and when once you get sucked under there will be an end of you."

Harry was just on the point of making a full confession, when Selby, the private pupil, his persecutor of the first evening, walked up to him with his air of importance and

said, "Glad to hear you are such a swimmer, youngster. I will put your swimming powers to the test, and if you do what you say you *can* do, you shall be put in training as cockswain of our outrigger, and if you don't you will be drowned like a mouse in a water-bucket, only I suspect the mouse is the better swimmer of the two. You shall take a header into Mother Beeston's Pool. It's only thirty-five feet deep, and there's a perfect cavern in the bank under the water there which I defy you to get out of unless you are a better swimmer than I take you for. Your granny won't be of much use to you there, I imagine."

Just at the same moment another private pupil joined them, a strong, good-tempered looking fellow called Calverley. He had heard Selby's speech and stopped to hear Harry's answer. The boy was now a good deal irritated, he could not bear to be spoken to in that tone of intense contempt, and the final allusion to his grandmother completely hardened him. Harry felt that it would be better to die than to endure the sneers of such a merciless persecutor as Selby. So he answered very decidedly—

"I shall take a header in any place you choose. The depth of the water is indifferent to me if only it is deep enough for me to run no risk of knocking my head against the bottom."

Calverley asked what day the trial was to take place, and Selby said, "To-morrow afternoon at three o'clock. It will be Saturday afternoon." Now, as it happened, Calverley had a very pleasant engagement to spend the afternoon in a charming country seat about seven miles from Brambleby, but he immediately went to his room and wrote a note to excuse himself. "I must take care that

foolish little boy is not drowned," he said to himself; "that fellow Selby is perfectly capable of sneering at him till he puts himself in great danger."

The rest of the day was not at all agreeable to our hero. Greenfield minor felt hurt by his want of confidence and left him entirely to himself. Selby spoke to him several times in a tone of most irritating patronage, mixed with the keenest irony, and as for Calverley, to whom Harry felt that he might look for protection, he had disappeared in his own room and Harry saw no more of him. The boys treated our hero rather distantly, and he felt very keenly that until three o'clock on the following day, the public opinion of the school would be in a state of suspension so far as he was concerned.

The next day at dinner Dr. Templeman said, "I am glad it is a fine day, you can go and have a swim. You, Blount, will be glad to swim in our river, you have no river I think at Bilsbury." There was just the same peculiar smile on the Doctor's countenance that had crushed our hero the day before. "I am sorry I cannot go to see you swim," the Doctor continued, "but I have an engagement. By-the-by, Calverley, you are going to the same place, will you take a seat in my gig?"

"I wrote yesterday to excuse myself, sir, and am very sorry I cannot accept your kind offer."

"I am surprised at that. It is a house you like to go to, and where you are an old favourite. They will be disappointed that you don't go. Come, never mind your letter, come with me all the same, I will say it was my doing, I know Sir Thomas will be glad to see you."

Calverley looked very much tempted, but answered firmly, "No, sir, I have a duty to perform at Brambleby



this afternoon which I shall be glad to explain to you in private."

"Not the least necessity, Calverley, for any such explanation. If you say you have a duty to perform I am satisfied that you have one, and that it will be gone through to the best of your ability."

At three o'clock all the boarders were at the water's edge at Mother Beeston's Pool. Selby was there amongst the rest, and Calverley stood by watching the proceedings. Several of the boys undressed rapidly and took headers from the bank, which was fully six feet above the level of the water. Harry undressed too, and his mind was perfectly made up that he would take his header like the others, come of it what might.

Selby found time to say, "I think, Master Blount, you take a long time about undressing. Are you afraid of Mother Beeston's Pool, now you see it?"

Harry answered nothing, but flung down the last vestige of his clothing and was taking his run like the others when a strong hand caught his shoulder and stopped him. It was Calverley who said quietly, "Just wait a little this time, another time you shall do as you like, but for the present you must submit to a little inconvenience." And Calverley took from a fishing-basket that was slung over his shoulders a piece of strong cord about twenty-five yards long. He had purchased this half-an-hour before at Brambleby. Then he began to fasten his cord about Harry's chest and shoulders with very good knots, so as not to impede the action of his arms. Harry protested that it was needless, but to tell the truth it comforted his mind very considerably.

Selby said, "The boy is a good swimmer, Calverley, what's the good of hampering him with a tether?"

Calverley answered dryly, "I don't believe in his swimming, nor do you either, Selby, but I am determined he shall not be drowned."

"Now, sir, you may jump in if you like," said Calverley, holding the other end of the rope.

Harry attempted his header, with feelings very like those of a man about to commit suicide, and being entirely unpractised in the art he received a horrible blow from the water that nearly stunned him, and then he wanted a breath of air, but there was no air to be had down in Mother Beeston's Pool. As for the fine theories about floating so easily on deep water, he did not find that they were of the least use to him down there. He struggled and floundered, and instead of floating as the books said that the human body must do of necessity, he went down deeper and deeper into the cavernous hole. He opened his eyes and saw nothing but a horrible brown darkness, his ears were full of roaring noises, and if he had attempted to breathe, his lungs would soon have been filled and he would have passed into perfect insensibility. Just when he felt that he could endure the privation of air no longer, he felt a strong tug at the cord, and was rapidly pulled up towards the light. He saw the water become lighter and lighter till at last his head emerged into the air, and he got that first gulp of it which he so terribly needed.

Then Calverley's voice was audible, "Now keep cool and take your breath quietly whilst I help you down stream to a better landing-place. You see the cord sustains you and you have nothing to fear."

Harry felt sufficiently supported by the cord, and in a minute or two had floated down stream to a place where there was a little beach, and here he soon scrambled on shore.

Calverley said, "Now you have had enough bathing for to-day, go and dress yourself. If you cannot swim yet you have pluck enough to learn, and I will teach you myself."

Harry felt dreadfully crestfallen, especially as he saw Greenfield minor and the other fellows playing in the deep-water like frogs or ducks, but as soon as he was dressed he went to Calverley and said with much sincerity and warmth of feeling, "You have saved my life and I am very grateful to you. I have been a fool, and done wrong, and I am very sorry."

Calverley laughed in the kindest way and said, "You had partly persuaded yourself, you partly believed your own story, but nobody else did. I must have a bit of talk with you some day."

Just then the other boys who had dressed themselves came round our hero, and laughed at him very heartily, which he did not find very agreeable. Then Calverley said, "I don't think we need chaff him very much, for he showed great pluck. Few fellows would have cared to take a header into such a place without being much surer of their swimming powers than he was. There's the stuff of a first-rate swimmer in him, and he will do well with proper training. I shall teach him myself."

Meanwhile Selby had disappeared. Calverley with his rope had spoiled his afternoon's amusement. Harry went back very cheerfully to the Doctor's house, for if his pretensions had been reduced to their proper level, he felt at any rate relieved from the anxieties of an impostor, and also that he had gained a friend, or patron, who was likely to be of the greatest use to him.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EXPERIENCES OF A FAG.

DR. TEMPLEMAN'S little school at Brambleby was not precisely like the great public schools in every respect, and retained, in fact, too much of the old local Yorkshire spirit to copy Eton or Harrow in any servile way ; but it happened that, mainly through the influence of the private pupils, who often came from the public schools, and passed some time with Dr. Templeman, before going to Cambridge, or into the professions, certain Harrow or Eton customs had taken root to some extent at Brambleby, since Dr. Templeman had been Head Master there. Amongst these there had been one or two attempts to establish fagging, but these had only succeeded so far that the institution was known and tolerated at Brambleby, disappearing and re-appearing according to the character of the private pupils, who alone attempted to carry it into practice. It had come to be an admitted theory, however, that a private pupil might choose a fag from amongst the boys, and one or two of them did so very much in earnest, whilst others never troubled the small boys at all. Whenever a private pupil had the nature and qualities of a petty tyrant, he exercised them

by choosing a fag, but when he had not these qualities he did without a fag, and contented himself with the service of his own hands, or of Dr. Templeman's domestics.

Thus the reader perceives that fagging was only half established as a Brambleby institution. The Doctor did nothing to influence it one way or the other. He must have been well aware that it existed in the school, but he tolerated it without any attempt to put an end to the evil, which the slightest exercise of his authority would have done very effectually. I rather fancy that the existence of it flattered his pride, as it was a point of resemblance between his little school and the great public schools of the south. It may have been for the same reason that he warmly encouraged the boating; and himself subscribed to each of the three boats, which made the school so prettily conspicuous on the river.

A day or two after Harry's swimming adventure, Selby walked into the school playground, and ordered him to attend and listen to something he had to say. Harry did not feel disposed to obey the summons, but there was such tremendous decision and authority in Selby's voice that he felt compelled to submit to him, and so followed into the corner where Selby sat down upon the garden-seat. Harry felt inclined to sit down also, as an assertion of his own dignity, but when it came to the point, he found he had not courage enough to do so, as Selby enthroned himself exactly in the middle of the seat with an air of despotic importance.

"Youngster," he said, after a pause, "I have to inform you that henceforth you are my fag, and must enter immediately upon the duties of your new situation. Are you aware in what those duties consist?"

Harry had not the remotest notion what a "fag" might

mean, there being no involuntary slavery of that kind at Bilsbury. So he said, "No."

"Speak to me more respectfully, youngster. Considering the relation now established between us, it would become you to say, 'No, sir.'"

Harry began to wonder whether after all this Selby might not be one of the masters, so he said,

"I did not know that you were one of the masters, sir. I thought you were a private pupil."

"I am a private pupil, but I am your master."

"Am I to bring my work to you, then, sir, instead of to Mr. Barton, as I have done since I came here?"

Selby stared with two eyes of the most disagreeable aspect, and then laughed shortly and bitterly.

"I have nothing whatever to do with your Latin and arithmetic. That is your business, not mine. Your duties to me are of quite another character. In fact, they are comprehended under a single head—obedience. I command; you obey. It is my place to give orders; it is your place to execute them, and execute them promptly."

Harry was nettled at these words, and still more at the tone with which they were pronounced. So he asked, rather rebelliously, "What sort of orders?" in a manner which clearly implied that there might be orders which he would decline to execute.

"That is what you will learn by experience. To begin with, look at my boots. You perceive they are dusty since I have taken a walk on the public road. Take them off immediately, fetch my slippers from my room, borrow the necessary brushes in the scullery, and brush my boots."

Harry felt lost in astonishment at this order. He had no conception whatever that in coming to Brambleby

School he had incurred the liability to servile work of this kind. His spirit of self-respect was roused at once, and he answered, very courageously,

"I am neither a shoeblack nor your servant. I will not touch your boots."

Selby was filling a pipe of tobacco, and he took time to light it very deliberately before noticing Harry. Having seen that the tobacco was well lighted all round the top of the pipe, he finally put the flaming paper exactly over the centre and then threw it away. The flame illuminated his countenance, from below, but there was not the faintest trace of anger, or of any emotion whatever.

At last he turned his eyes on Harry. They were perfectly benignant. "My dear boy," he said, very kindly, "I quite anticipated your spirited reply, and it is not my intention to have any dispute with you, either with reference to this first act of disobedience, or any subsequent one. You incur the punishment, that is all—the necessary punishment which I have fixed and determined in cool blood, in order that I might not be tempted to any excessive rigour by the irritation of a moment." Then he took a little pocket-book from his pocket, and read aloud :—

"PUNISHMENTS FOR MY FAG :

"For an act of disobedience without open refusal, twenty-five blows."

"For an act of disobedience accompanied by open rebellion, fifty blows."

"You have incurred the latter of these two punishments, but I shall not inflict it at present. I might possibly be tempted to put more force into the blows than I contemplated when I made the law. For the present, we

will have a little talk together of a kind that may do you good. Sit down here beside me."

Selby made room on the garden-seat, and Harry sat down obediently, more surprised in his own mind than ever.

"Do you smoke?" said Selby, taking a cigar-case from his pocket full of tremendously strong Havanas, and offering it very politely to Harry.

"No, thank you, I don't smoke at all."

Selby still held out the cigar-case, and began another of his discourses. "You appear to be under the impression that it is possible for you to decline a civility offered to you by your superior. It is not possible. The inferior must *always*, whether agreeable to him or not, accept an act of kindness or hospitality which his superior condescends to offer. To act otherwise would be an unpardonable breach of good manners, and I may warn you that such an error in conduct has been foreseen in the little code of rules which I have already explained to you in part. You will therefore accept one of these cigars. They are excellent, although perhaps rather full-flavoured for a young smoker."

Harry began to feel himself strongly controlled by the presence of a superior and very powerful will. He had also the curiosity of a boy about the manly pleasure of smoking, and the two influences together decided him, so he accepted the offered luxury. Selby was politeness itself. He removed the point of the cigar with his pen-knife, lighted a piece of paper for Harry, and opened for him the elysium of smoke with the manner of a benignant angel leading Ingenuous Youth to the realms of Perfect Bliss.

The first few puffs, as is usual with the inexperienced,



put more smoke and nicotine into Harry's constitution than an old smoker would have taken in during the enjoyment of half a cigar. However he went at it boldly, if awkwardly, and blew clouds like a steam-engine working at high-pressure.

Selby went on with his little discourses, always in the gentlest manner. "I have to explain to you the relation which will subsist between us in future. You do not appear to be aware that there is such an institution as fagging, or to comprehend its utility as a discipline. In the great public schools it has existed from time immemorial, and is of the greatest use in the formation of the manly English character, since it teaches boys to obey, and to command, and makes them understand their place in society. Without it, a young gentleman would never pass through the experience of humility."

"Well, but I'm sure I wasn't sent here to be a shoe-black."

"You were sent here to get the full benefit of such education as Brambleby may afford, and it happens very fortunately for inexperienced country youths like yourself that the customs of the great public schools have taken root here also of late years. One of the best of these is fagging, though it is practised here in the greatest moderation. The private pupils take fags from amongst the boys. I have done you the honour to select you as my fag, because I see that there is some good in you, and I intend to develop it and make an Englishman of you before I have done."

Poor Harry was beginning to feel rather out of condition for argument. That strong Havana was rapidly producing its effect, and our hero was already partially poisoned. Nevertheless, he found strength to say—

"An Englishman does not submit to downright tyranny."

"An Englishman," answered Selby, "has a proper feeling of deference for his superiors, and submits to their authority. This is the great distinction between the English and the French. There is no fagging in French schools, and there is no deference towards the nobility, nor any real loyalty towards the sovereign. In England, on the other hand, every man knows his place and respects his superior, whilst he exacts a due degree of deference from those beneath him. Fagging is a part of this system of things, and it will be an unfortunate day for England when it is done away with, if ever the advance of republican principles gets so far as that. And now, to come from generals to particulars, your duty as my fag is simply to obey my orders. If you do this properly you will derive many advantages ; if not, your existence in this place will not be very agreeable to you."

As Selby was uttering these last sentences, Harry began to suffer from sensations altogether new to him. The playground began to seem as unsteady as the deck of a ship, the chimneys of the school-room that rose above the trees began to totter, as it seemed, like chimneys in an earthquake, and there was a horrible sinking in Harry's inside which seemed to drag him down, down, into a fearfully gloomy region of physical depression, such as he had never hitherto imagined. He became as pale as death, even his hands grew white and cadaverous, whilst in the palms of them, there was a cold clammy moisture as different from the perspiration of healthy exercise as death is different from life. And the fact was that Harry had taken *poison*—not enough to kill him, but quite enough to make him dreadfully unwell. When he could endure it no longer, he flung the half-smoked cigar into the shrubbery, and getting

upon his legs staggered away to some corner where he suffered agonies like those of a poisoned rat in its hole. Here Greenfield minor found him out and took him to the pump, and pumped on his face and head. This revived him a little, but he was utterly unfit for work during the whole evening, and went to bed in a state of great wretchedness. Meanwhile Selby had gone into the house with a quiet smile on his face, and a sense of satisfaction in his mind, to smoke half-a-dozen more pipes in his own room, and play three games at chess, which he won, as usual, by superior coolness and skill.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PUNISHMENT.

HARRY felt well again the next morning, and went through his work and play pleasantly enough until evening, a little troubled, however, in his own mind, by some anxiety as to the punishment reserved for him by his new tyrant. About half-past six o'clock, Selby sauntered into the playground, and invited Harry to follow him to the garden-seat.

"You are now to receive your punishment for last evening's disobedience."

With these words Selby seized Harry's left hand, and twisted the arm as a washerwoman twists linen to wring the water out of it. The under-side of the arm being thus brought uppermost, he delivered a heavy blow between the shoulder and elbow. Fortunately, Harry's arm was both strong and muscular, and could bear a blow as easily as most, but the twist and the stroke together were painful in the extreme. Other blows succeeded, as steadily as the beating of a pendulum, and always with exactly the same measured degree of force. Meanwhile, the arm was held as in a vice, for Selby was a most powerful young man, and there was not the faintest chance for his victim to escape. The pain of the first blows had been very hard

to bear, but afterwards a sort of numbness succeeded, and the twist of the arm seemed worse than the strokes themselves. Harry became almost sick with pain, but bore it with considerable courage.

When twenty-five blows had been delivered, Selby released his victim. "The punishment," he said, "was fifty blows, according to the written law, but I reserve the remaining twenty-five until to-morrow evening. And now take my boots off, and clean them, as I ordered you on a preceding occasion."

The pain that Harry felt, instead of disposing him to obedience, had just the contrary effect. It nerved him to defiance. "Whatever comes of it," he thought, "I will *never* clean that fellow's boots. He shall kill me first, but I *will not* clean his boots." So he answered with a voice rather tremulous, in consequence of excitement and emotion,

"I shall never clean your boots as long as I live."

"It is a matter of simple choice between the duty and the punishment. If you prefer the punishment, I have no objection, and will promise to administer it regularly. By-the-by, as this second refusal of yours incurs fifty blows on its own account, and twenty-five are still due for your first refusal, that makes seventy-five blows to be paid to-morrow evening, which is rather excessive for one time. It therefore seems better that you should receive twenty-five more this evening, in order to equalize matters."

So saying, he seized Harry's other hand, twisted it as before, and administered twenty-five blows on the arm that had hitherto been spared. The strokes were strong, and perfectly regular, the last neither lighter nor heavier than the first. Harry endured it bravely, but when it was over he felt as if his arms from the elbow downwards did not belong to him,

whilst the upper part of them was in such a confusion of numbness and pain that no natural feeling was left in them. The twisting had been as hard to bear as Selby's fist, and Harry thought his shoulders were both dislocated. However, no permanent harm was done, but our hero had certainly received very severe treatment, and if Mr. Selby had had the courage and the manliness to do as much to any full-grown Yorkshireman in the streets of Brambleby, he would either have incurred summary chastisement on the spot, or else discovered that the laws of England do not permit amusements of this description—except within the walls of schools.

But he had not quite done with his victim even yet.

"Now, my dear boy," he went on, "let us think no more about this little difficulty concerning the boots. I am fully persuaded that it will all come right in time. You take your punishment well, I am happy to observe, and it will do you immense good by hardening you in courage and endurance. But as I am not a tyrannical master, although you did so far forget the truth as to affirm something of the kind in a moment of temporary irritation, I think not only of your physical advantage in hardening you to the endurance of pain, but also of your pleasures. Now I know by experience that there is not one pleasure in life comparable to smoking. It soothes and tranquillizes the feelings, it helps the expansion of all benevolent and kindly sentiments, and it has a decidedly beneficial effect upon the intellectual powers, as is shown by the common combination of smoking with chess-playing—that most intellectual of games. For these reasons, I intend you to become a smoker, at my expense, of course. Yesterday, I had the pleasure of offering you a cigar—an excellent Havana, whose qualities you are not yet able to

appreciate. It was certainly too strong for a beginner. I regret not to have had anything milder to offer you. But to-day I have bought you a little present, which I hope you will accept in the same friendly spirit with which it is offered."

Having said this, Selby took from his pocket a short meerschaum pipe, in a case of red Russia leather. He handed it to Harry without opening the case. Curiosity, and the desire of possession, overcame Harry's sense of dignity, and he took the gift, opening the case rather eagerly, and finding inside it what is certainly one of the prettiest things in the world, a gracefully-shaped little pipe, made of the pure "sea-foam," with a jewel-like amber mouthpiece, all nestling in a bed of purple velvet, the lid being lined daintily with white satin. For an instant Harry felt tempted to crush the gift under his heel, but it looked so very pretty that he had not courage to destroy it. After that, he wished to refuse it, but after looking at it a second or two longer, and taking it tenderly out of its nest, this also became impossible. Just then, before Harry spoke, his strange tempter and persecutor took from his pocket a new tobacco-pouch, in Russia leather, to match the pipe-case, and said, "You must accept the pouch along with the pipe; they go together, you see. I have had it filled with some mild tobacco that you can smoke without making yourself ill. And here is a little case for matches, also in Russia leather. If you like, I will tell my book-binder to put your initials, in gilt letters, on all the three things. H. B., is it not?"

The reader may think that Harry showed a deplorable want of spirit, and I don't much admire him myself just now; however, he was only a boy, and had hardly ever possessed anything that lifted him so high towards manhood.

as he fancied that the possession of this smoking apparatus would do. Besides, it was an exquisitely pretty smoking apparatus, and although he had been so ill the evening before, he was assured that this mild tobacco, and this beautiful pipe, would give him nothing but pleasure. So the end was that he accepted and said, "Thank you, I am much obliged to you."

Selby made him sit down as they had done the evening before, and then he gave Harry a lesson about filling his pipe and lighting it. Certainly the tobacco was much milder than the cigar had been, and Harry got to the end of his pipe without interruption. But when he got up to walk to the school-room for the evening's study there was another crisis of sickness in a corner of the little shrubbery, with all the horrible misery of the first experience. He was ten minutes late in the school-room, and looked so ghastly as to attract the attention of the under-master. "Blount looks dreadfully ill," he observed, "and so he did last night. Why, I declare he smells of tobacco! It is incredible, but this boy has actually been smoking. I must inform Dr. Templeman of this."

Here Greenfield minor interposed with a word of palliation or excuse. "It is not his fault, sir, he was forced to smoke against his will by Selby."

"I wish those private pupils were a hundred miles from here," muttered Mr. Barton between his teeth.

But he said no more to Harry about his smoking, and he made no report on the subject to Dr. Templeman. The fact was, Mr. Barton knew quite well that he had not the power necessary to contend against Selby, and that the Doctor would be pretty sure to support a private pupil, under all circumstances. Mr. Barton's wish that the private pupils were a hundred miles from Brambleby would



have been most beneficial to the school if it could have been realized ; for they took up most of the Doctor's time, and interfered considerably with the internal discipline of the Grammar School, which was left almost exclusively to the over-worked under-master. The Doctor heard the readings in Latin and Greek in his private room, and went down to the Grammar School twice a day as a matter of form, for an inspection, but his real energy was given to his own pupils. This was intelligible enough, as these young men were much more advanced than the Grammar boys, and the Doctor was too good a scholar himself not to prefer an advanced pupil to a raw beginner ; still the school suffered, though the Doctor's inspections were as sharp and thoroughgoing as they possibly could be in the time.

Harry asked Greenfield minor if it would be of any use to complain to Dr. Templeman about Selby's treatment of him ; but Greenfield strongly dissuaded him from any such step. "Templeman likes there to be fagging here," he said, "because he thinks it makes this little Grammar School like Eton and Harrow, and if you were to complain it would only be a note against you. I am a fag myself, I am Hawkesworth's fag, but he doesn't trouble me very much. He makes me light the fire in his room sometimes when it has gone out, and brush his coat, and so on, but it doesn't matter. I would rather be Hawkesworth's fag than Selby's, though. Selby is a tyrannical sort of fellow. Has he given you anything yet ? He is liberal in presents to his fags, and the more he punishes them the more presents he makes them."

Harry showed the pipe and its accompaniments. Greenfield laughed and said, "I thought so. That is Selby's way. Now don't you see that because you have accepted

that pipe you are more in his power than ever. You cannot complain much now of what he does to you."

Our hero felt the truth of this observation very keenly, and bitterly regretted that he had not refused the pipe at first; I may observe, that these regrets were the easier to him now since the pipe had made him sick and he no longer looked upon it with the eyes of inexperienced illusion. He was not happy, either physically or mentally. Both his arms were as painful as they well could be, his head and stomach were utterly out of order, and he had little to look forward to but fresh blows and perpetual tobacco-poisoning. When he laid his poor dizzy head on the pillow that night, he thought with bitter regret of dear old Bilsbury Grange and of the good lady who was sitting there alone, sadly thinking of him, and little dreaming what were the real miseries of his present state of existence. She feared that the studies might press hardly upon him, but he took to them readily enough and soon earned the good opinion of his masters. The difficult times for Harry were those hours of recreation when he was liable at any time to fall into the hands of Selby, his owner and tormentor.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A CHANGE OF MASTERS.

THE next evening at the usual hour Selby began administering the blows which were still owing to his unfortunate fag.

Whilst he was so engaged, another personage, who seldom visited the playground, entered upon the scene, and that was Calverley.

As soon as Calverley came in sight, Selby, for some reason or other, gave up at the fourteenth blow instead of proceeding to the twenty-fifth according to his original intention. Calverley, however, had seen enough of the punishment to be clearly aware that it was interrupted because he happened to be a witness. "Selby," he said, "may I ask what you are doing that for?"

"This is my fag, and I am punishing him for disobedience."

Calverley reflected a minute, and then said, "I don't think you had any right to take this boy for your fag without asking me whether I intended to have him. I have no fag at all, and I am your senior here. If you have no objection, I should like to have Blount for my fag."

The words were very civil and gentle, but there was

something very determined in Calverley's manner, and for some reason unknown to Harry his persecutor did not offer the slightest resistance or objection. "Very well, Calverley, if you wish it," was all the answer Selby made, and so, in an instant, the slave changed masters, like a slave that is sold in the market.

Calverley had not the least taste for being a slave-owner, and had done without a fag very easily, being his own servant when those in the Doctor's little establishment had not time to do everything that was necessary to his comfort. Harry, however, did not as yet know Calverley, though he felt grateful to him for his kind intervention on the swimming occasion, and he was not yet aware of the great change in his favour which had just taken place. To be "a fag" in any circumstances appeared to him a very unfortunate position. Calverley began by looking at his watch, "You have half-an-hour yet; just come with me to my room."

Harry followed his new owner, and when they were alone together in Calverley's private room the latter made inquiries about Selby's treatment of his victim. When he heard the details, including the gift of the smoking apparatus, he walked about the room in considerable irritation and said aloud, but more to himself than to Harry,

"What a perfect system it is, what a complete art of lowering and degrading a human being! The boy's self-respect is first wounded by being ordered to render menial service, and after that fought down by blows, and finally debilitated by bribes! This is the way to educate Englishmen into snobbishness. They say that it prepares us for the world of men, but in that world there are laws for the protection of the oppressed, or of those who would be op-

pressed without them, whereas here there is no law but the will of the strong man, and nothing to come between him and his victim."

Having said this, Calverley stopped in his walk and spoke more directly to Harry.

"You did right to refuse to clean Selby's boots, that is not your work in life. But I think you would have done better still to decline the gift of the pipe, unless you really felt grateful to Selby for his treatment of you, which is inconceivable."

"I am sorry now that I took the pipe, but I was afraid of refusing it as I had been ordered to accept a cigar the evening before."

"Yes, and the pipe tempted you perhaps. Let me see it. What a Mephistopheles that Selby is! Such a pipe would tempt any one! But would you think it hard to part with it now after what has occurred?"

"I would part with the pipe willingly enough, but I hardly like to take it back to Selby."

"Well, give it me, and I will manage that for you."

Harry gave up his pipe and its accompaniments not unwillingly, and still there was just a little pang at parting. Calverley evidently succeeded in making Selby take the things back again, for a day or two afterwards he was smoking the same pipe himself when they went to row on the river.

Harry soon found that there was a great difference between his new owner and his former one. Calverley exercised a good deal of authority, but never for his own pleasure or advantage, always for Harry's own improvement in some way or other. In fact Calverley had taken a great fancy to Harry, and had privately decided in his own mind that he would be as useful to him as he could.

But there was never anything of the pedagogue in Calverley's manner, and his influence over Harry, which soon became very great indeed, was due as much to the easy good sense of his conversation as to his superiority in age and acquirement. As an instance of this I may mention his treatment of the question about smoking. "It was wrong of Selby," he said, "to try to force you into the habit so prematurely. The great thing for a lad of your age is to build up a sound and healthy constitution, and it is certain that smoking interferes with that, at least to some extent, by weakening the digestive powers. As for pleasure, there is no physical pleasure like that of being in perfect health, and feeling that you are so. I am not a bigot against smoking, and can appreciate a good cigar, but it is perfectly certain that, to say the least, it is an entirely unnecessary indulgence, for the great nations of antiquity who cultivated human nature, both physically and mentally, to the highest perfection, were not smokers, and the English race took its place in the world long before the habit became general. I don't forbid you to smoke whilst you are with me, but I want you to judge wisely about the matter for yourself, and then act on your own judgment. Above all, promise me that you won't make a clandestine vice either of it or of anything else, and that you will let me know what your habits are, in everything." This was said so kindly that Harry promised at once, and Calverley won his confidence completely.

Harry's new patron had a good influence even upon his studies, for the young gentleman was much too inquisitive to take everything upon trust, and as Calverley always encouraged him in the frank expression of his feelings they had many little conversations such as the following.

"I wonder why we are made to learn Latin and Greek. Are they really of much use, do you think?"

"They are of use when thoroughly learned, but not of much use when learned as boys generally learn them in grammar schools, when they go away at fifteen or sixteen to be articled to attorneys or put into business, with a very slight knowledge of Latin, and just Greek enough to read the Greek characters. It is so with all knowledge. For instance, it would be delightful to be able to play really well on the violin, but what is the good of playing badly? But the truth is that even at sixteen we might know Latin and Greek far better than we do if only we worked with a hearty good-will as we do at boating and cricket. Our teachers ought simply to have to guide us, whereas they have to push us too, and keep us in motion, for we have no motion of our own, and as soon as they give up pushing we stop altogether. If we were all like Lady Jane Grey, who was passionately fond of her classical studies, and worked with a will of her own, we might be as good scholars as she was.'

"Well but how am I to make myself take an interest in Latin and Greek? They don't interest me. I do the work because I am told, but when I leave school I don't suppose I shall ever open a Latin or Greek book again."

"Ah! there you honestly express the feeling of nineteen schoolboys out of twenty, and when the nineteen are men they just do as you say, they never open a Latin or Greek classic again, so that all the years of their youth are nearly, but not quite, wasted years. What a great pity it is! All that can be said is that if you do what you can to get over the difficulties, you may possibly in time find that you begin to take an interest in these studies. At any

rate we are compelled to spend a great deal of time over them, so the best way is to get on as fast as we can in the time, for it is pleasanter to read a language easily than to be always stopped by grammar-difficulties. It's no use being pig-headed and sticking in the mud. And there is another way of putting the matter to you. I see you are fond of reading English poetry, and have little pocket editions of 'Marmion' and the 'Lady of the Lake.' Now how would it be if you could read Virgil for the poetry too, as you read Scott?"

"I *can't* read Virgil so. Perhaps I might if I knew Latin as well as English, but I don't and never shall do. In reading Latin I can think of nothing but words and grammar. In English I haven't to think about words and grammar, so I enjoy the poetry."

"Yes, that is the difficulty; but the difficulty will gradually diminish as you advance. And this is just the great reason for not resting contented with mere schoolboy Latin. You don't suppose Dr. Templeman has any occasion to think about words and grammar when he reads Latin, he can go to the poetry or history at once."

"Yet he seems to think about nothing but words and grammar. He never talks to us about Virgil's poetry, and he talks about words just like a dictionary."

The fact was that the Doctor had got into the common habit of schoolmasters, who, however much interest they may take in literature, are constantly driven, by the ignorance of their pupils, to minute explanations about words, so that after a few years of such teaching they often forget that the classic authors were producers of literature, and look upon their writings as a collection of verbs, substantives, prepositions, &c., arranged according to the rules of grammar. Calverley's way of thinking about ancient litera-



ture was entirely different from this, and gradually Harry Blount caught his truer and higher ideas. The notion that Virgil was as much a poet as Sir Walter Scott, and that the "Æneid" might be read *for the poetry* just as one reads the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," gradually took root in Harry's mind, and very soon made his work much more interesting and agreeable to him. This increased interest was followed by a great stride in his progress, which considerably surprised both the head-master and the tail-master, neither of whom had any idea that Calverley's salutary influence was the true cause of Blount's remarkable advance.

## CHAPTER VII.

### OUR HERO LEARNS TO SWIM.

CALVERLEY kept his promise about the swimming, and applied to Dr. Templeman for authority to take Harry with him to the river at any time in recreation-hours. His method was extremely simple, but it has been found to be efficacious in many instances, and in the present case succeeded quite as rapidly as Calverley expected. With a little arrangement of straps round Harry's chest a cord was readily fastened to a point between his shoulders, but rather lower down, and the other end of the cord was tied to a pole which Calverley held as one holds a fishing-rod, with the difference that it was considerably heavier. Then Harry trusted himself in deep water and found that he was always just sufficiently sustained to prevent him from getting water into his nostrils, so he could pay attention to the instructions of his teacher on the bank, and in this way he soon learned, first to move his limbs properly, and afterwards to combine his movements with effect, which is the whole art and mystery of swimming. Calverley himself, who was a fine swimmer, often began the lesson by first practising for Harry to watch from the bank, which was a great deal better for the pupil than any amount of woodcuts in books on manly exercises. He was so perfectly

at his ease in the water that he often seemed to do really nothing to sustain himself, but there was some slight, scarcely perceptible movement of hand or foot which he explained quite candidly to his pupil. As Harry had very little fear of the water, and Calverley played him no tricks, but always supported him as much as was necessary, the pupil became a swimmer before he was himself aware of it, for one day the cord hung quite loosely over his back whilst he accomplished the usual distance, he being all the time under the impression that Calverley's powerful arm alone prevented him from going to the bottom. The master said nothing at the time, but the next day they went to bathe he left the cord apparatus behind him, and when Harry was undressed he simply said,

"Now, Blount, you are my fag, and you know you must obey my orders."

"Yes, sir," said Harry with a touch of mock humility.

"Very well, do you see that purple flower on the other side of the river?"

"Yes."

"Then go and fetch it immediately."

"But the cord would not reach as far."

"Who talks of cords? I have left the cord at home. You are not to be always tethered. A few weeks ago you told us that you could swim, and it was not true; now I tell you that you *can* swim, and it *is* true. You can cross the stream perfectly well. Take a rest of two minutes on the opposite bank, and then swim back again to me. Only mind one thing. Don't hurry yourself!"

Harry felt a strangely mingled sensation of pride and apprehension, but if he had pluck enough to throw himself into Mother Beeston's Pool when he could not swim at all, it is clear that the same quality would not be wanting

when he was assured on good authority that his powers were equal to the emergency. So with a beating heart, and a flush of hope, he took his header from the bank, came up again and recovered his breath very quickly, and then set himself manfully to the considerable task before him. Calverley undressed hastily by way of precaution in case his pupil should need assistance, but after half-a-dozen strokes Harry's confidence in himself became quite firmly established, and then there came over him that glorious feeling of delight in a new power which man experiences when first he swims in deep water, and which he can never feel again in anything like the same intensity until he learns to fly, which he has not hitherto quite accomplished. Thanks to the good teaching he had received, and also to his natural courage, our hero did not stick in one place according to a common practice of beginners, who exhaust themselves without advancing any appreciable distance, but he soon put the first twenty yards between him and the shore, and after that felt sure of doing the rest without any risk or difficulty.

"Swim slowly," Calverley cried out from the bank, and Harry husbanded his strength. There was no current of any consequence, for it was a sleepy tranquil pool, so Harry had nothing to do but go straight to his mark.

Soon he landed on the opposite bank, and gathered the purple flower.

"Now wait till I tell you to come back again!" Calverley shouted across the stream.

Harry thought it looked wider than ever, and felt very much as Lord Byron felt after swimming from Sestos to Abydos. When the order to return was given, he put the flower carefully behind his ear, and set out as quietly and coolly as an old swimmer might have done.

"This is very good for to-day," Calverley said, "but it is quite enough. Dress yourself at once, and say nothing about it to the other fellows. We will tell nobody what you can do, till you cross the river three times without touching ground."

As Harry had now acquired the skill of a tolerably good swimmer, the rest was merely a question of the application of strength, and he had strength enough for what was required of him.

Before the cooler weather came on, Calverley announced to the Doctor that his pupil could take care of himself anywhere in the river. Then Harry went with his school-fellows to Mother Beeston's Pool, and did not look quite so ridiculous as he had done on a previous occasion. He subscribed to the boat, and was put into regular drill as an oarsman. Having all the aquatic instincts by nature, he took to this kind of work most heartily, and submitted to discipline as readily as if his bread had depended upon it. The consequence was that after some weeks of practice he rowed in tolerable form for so young a beginner.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A NEW-COMER.

THE school had now fallen into the steady habits of such a place when holidays past and to come are both a long way off, and work goes on from day to day with something like the regularity of a cotton-mill. From the beginning to the end of each week nothing whatever happened to disturb this orderly succession of work, and play, and sleep. Harry now knew all the boarders as well as he was likely to know them, had grown into an affectionate friendship with Greenfield, was on terms of pleasant acquaintance with the majority, and of indifference towards the rest. He had not an enemy in the place, and the state of his relations of friendship, acquaintance, or indifference seemed now so perfectly settled that he felt completely at home at Brambleby. Something was, however, now about to occur which would disturb this pleasant state of things, and alter Harry's position.

One day quite unexpectedly, and at none of the ordinary fixed times for receiving new pupils, a new boy made his appearance at Dr. Templeman's dinner-table. This boy was very fat and very handsome, but he had an unpleasant expression of countenance that entirely spoiled the agreeable effect of his good looks. He did not appear to

be in the least intimidated or disconcerted by the novelty of his position, or by his loneliness amongst strange faces, and he ate his dinner with a remarkably good appetite, just glancing round the table in an indifferent way from time to time between the large mouthfuls that his fine set of teeth disposed of so rapidly and effectually. He answered two or three questions Dr. Templeman addressed to him, and neither his tone of voice nor his accent was so refined as his dress and appearance would have led any one to expect.

In fact he spoke with a very strong Yorkshire accent, and in a tone of voice so loud that it seemed as if he had been accustomed to talk to deaf people.

The account he gave of himself was that he had been at another school in the same county, but that the Head Master had died suddenly, the school had been broken up, and so he had been sent here at once in order not to lose the rest of the half-year. In the playground after dinner the new boy walked about with the air of a man in his own garden, and his way of looking at his new school-fellows expressed the most complete indifference.

Everybody felt at once that he was rather an awkward sort of fellow to question, as new boys are generally questioned in a school, and for a little time no one ventured to disturb him. At last Greenfield major went straight to him and said, "What's your name?"

The new-comer turned slowly towards his interrogator, looked steadily at him for half a minute with his clear gray eyes, and appeared to feel undecided as to whether he would answer the inquiry, or knock the questioner down. At last he answered, "James Wade."

"What's your father?"

Mr. James Wade put a still longer interval between the

question and the answer, stared at the questioner very hard indeed, and then said, "My father's a farmer."

"How old are you?"

James Wade took out his watch and looked at it very deliberately. It was a handsome watch.

"You won't find your age by looking at your watch," Greenfield said, "I asked how old you were."

Wade answered in something between a shout and a screech, "Fourteen!" The tone of his voice expressed clearly enough that his patience was exhausted, and this, for the present, was all the information about James Wade which the school was able to get at, for the bell rang, and the boys were all summoned into the class-room.

There is always a good deal of curiosity in a school about a new arrival, and the smaller the number of boys the more general is the curiosity. When evening came, Wade sauntered about in the playground with the air of a gentleman, or rather, perhaps, of a well-to-do farmer, taking a walk in his own garden. Some of the younger boys felt disposed to knock his cap off, or play him a trick of some kind, that might have the effect of spoiling the dignity of his walk, but none of them liked to venture. At length Greenfield minor hit upon a little stratagem which seemed to promise success in combination with safety. He fastened a fish-hook to the end of a piece of string, climbed a tree, sat on one of the boughs, and waited till Wade, in his promenade, came exactly beneath him. The fish-hook stuck readily enough in the cloth of Wade's cap, and in an instant the cap itself was far out of the owner's reach. Wade looked up in surprise, and there was a general titter in the playground. He paid very little attention to this, and made no attempt to climb the tree, but, instead of walking all over the playground as he



had done before, he confined himself to a narrow circle, of which the tree trunk was the centre.

Greenfield first tossed the cap to a distance, and then came down the tree. The new-comer gave him a severe blow with his fist, before Greenfield could disengage himself from the trunk. On this, Harry Blount walked up to him with a very decided air, and said, "Fighting is not permitted here, and so you must be a coward if you know it, and strike Greenfield when he may not defend himself." Now as Wade had been at a school conducted on the old principles of perfect barbarism, and had owed most of his position in it to his fists, this announcement appeared to him not only disagreeable, but positively incredible.

"Do you mean to tell me that you are such a lot of sneaks that if two of you had a fight the other fellows would peach?"

"Nobody peaches here, but if you are very pugnacious you will take the consequences."

Greenfield stood quietly by whilst this little conversation was proceeding, not returning Wade's blow, though it had been a severe one. Wade hardly knew what to think of such extraordinary conduct, and began to have an intense contempt for Greenfield. Then he took off his jacket, rolled up his shirt-sleeves, set himself in a pugilistic attitude, and said, "Come on, like a man, can't you?" delivering at the same time a pair of well-planted blows on Greenfield's shoulder and chest.

On this Harry gave a signal to his other schoolfellows; and now Mr. James Wade was to learn by experience, how the school managed its own little police regulations without peaching. In an instant he was carried off his legs, and found himself powerless in the hands of five

strong boys, one to each arm, one to each foot, and a fifth to his curly head. He struggled furiously, but quite in vain.

"I think a little pump-water will do him no harm," said Harry Blount mildly.

Two fellows ran to the pump and began pumping as if the house was on fire. Dr. Templeman's pump was an excellent one, and always in the best possible order, so that the stream from it was copious and regular. James Wade's head was soon under it, and every time he attempted to remonstrate, his mouth was artfully placed immediately beneath the falling water. After some time, as the victim seemed likely to get choked, for he was fat and rather short-winded, Harry said, "I think he has had enough of it by this time, let him go." So Mr. Wade was set upon his legs again. At first he seemed rather giddy, and could hardly speak, but the very first use he made of his liberty was to go and find Dr. Templeman, and the first use he made of his tongue was simply to "peach" against Harry and his companions.

Wade was such a pitiable object, with his head all wet, and his shirt and waistcoat inundated, that the Doctor could not help laughing. "What's the matter now?" he asked. "Have the lads been pumping upon you?"

Wade began a confused account in which it was not quite clear how the affair began, so the Doctor sent for Harry Blount, whose story was accurately true and perfectly intelligible.

The Doctor said mildly to Harry, "I can't say that I quite approve of your way of carrying out Lynch law on a small scale; it would be better for one of you to come and make a complaint directly to myself, though I am perfectly aware that your own code of honour condemns

this as a sort of meanness. If you could get over your objection to what you call peaching, it would be a good thing. When a man is assaulted, he lodges a complaint at the proper place, and does not consider himself dishonoured by doing so. The system of Lynch law, which you are practising, may often be just in its sentences, but it is only used in half-civilized communities, where the legal authority is too weak, or at too great a distance. Now, my conviction is, that the nearer a school approaches to the state of a civilized nation the better—your Lynch law is an improvement on the barbarism of single combat; but it is not yet the best thing. I must inflict a slight punishment on all concerned in this business. You and your fellows who pumped on Wade must spend your next half-holiday in writing a punishment exercise, which shall be a Latin Essay on Barbarism.”

Then turning to Wade with a much severer look, the Doctor went on to say :—“For you the only excuse is that you are perfectly new to the school, and you have been sufficiently punished. But now, just let me give you my opinion about fighting. No doubt, it is the primitive way of settling disputes, and giving each man his place in a very rude state of society. But England is no longer in such a rude state, it is a highly civilized country, and English boys ought to behave to each other as nearly as possible as English gentlemen do. You ought not to be young savages, but young gentlemen. Now, when two gentlemen have cause of quarrel, they never fight in any case—even the duel is gone out with us—but they appeal to the law. That is the main use of having a law at all. It keeps the peace. In a school like this, the master has real legal authority, and therefore, if the boys want to be-

have as men do, they must not fight, but appeal to law, by referring their dispute to the master. As to the strength and pluck which fighting exercises, they can be exercised in other ways, in swimming, boating, cricket, gymnastics; and all these I heartily approve and encourage. Don't suppose for a moment that Englishmen have lost their pluck and courage since they gave up boxing and duelling: they use these qualities in other things. Boys may do the same. You, Wade, seem to be a bold sort of fellow, with a combative disposition, so try to put your courage and energy to better uses."

Blount reflected a good deal on the Doctor's discourse, and asked himself whether the Doctor's high and doubtless correct notions about the Reign of Law should not be applied to fagging as well as fighting, as fagging appeared to Harry's youthful mind, after his recent experience of Selby, by far the more barbarous practice of the two. The consequences of these reflections, and others about the master's authority, may be reserved for another chapter.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HARRY BLOUNT AS A LATIN ESSAYIST.

HARRY was not yet very clever in Latin composition, though he had made some progress since he arrived at Brambleby. However, though the Latin he wrote was poor enough, and faulty enough, it had the merit of being generally intelligible, and was in fact easier, if not more grammatical, than the prose of Tacitus. If the reader will take the trouble to look through the following composition he will have the advantage of learning Harry Blount's opinions about barbarism.

#### DE BARBARIE.

"Apud Romanos et Athenienses alienigenus hoc nomine 'barbaro,' signatus est, ut etiam nunc in chinam\* est consuetudo. Sed tamen inter nos hodie hoc verbum alteram significationem habet. Hominem ferum incultumque 'barbarum' vocamus, et actum sævum. Pugnare barbarus est, conditionibus æquis, sed magis barbarus est quando fortis cum debile pugnat, debile invito. Exempli gratiâ, quando in scholâ sunt duo discipuli, unus senior, junior alter, et senior juniorem faggum suum vocat,

\* We print Harry's Latin just as he wrote it, faults and all.

terens illum quotidie, non oppugnatus, hæc consuetudo non barbara sed barbarissima est. Quicumque desiderat hanc consuetudinem barbarissimam videre, in scholâ Bramblebiense videbit, ubi tyrannus impunitus victimam suam sæpe affligit. Hominem lex protegit, sed nullâ lege puer protectus est. Oportet illum dolorem patienter pati, sine jus suum vindicare.

“Barbarus est etiam fusti discipulum cædere, quia magister fortior est discipulo et armatus, quod discipulus imparatus est. Magister qui discipulos suos ad humanitatem instruit, illos aut scribere aut legere cogit. Exempli gratiâ, vir doctissimus, magister noster, hanc pænam a nobis sumpsit, scilicet hanc paginam scribere.”

When the boys were supposed to have finished their Latin compositions they were called together into the Doctor's study, and handed them to him one after another. Harry had felt very courageous whilst engaged in the composition of his protest, at a distance from the Doctor's eye, but now that he was actually under its influence his feelings began to be different. Dr. Templeman read slowly, making a mark here and there and giving no sign that he paid any attention to the meaning, till he came to the bit about fagging at Brambleby school, on which he raised his eyes from the paper and looked at Harry with some severity. “Faggum! faggum!” he said with a grunt, “I see Mr. Blount is enriching the Latin tongue! ‘Chinam’ might pass (if it were in the right case), as the ancients don't appear to have known any people farther east than the Sinæ, but faggum!” As he read to the end of the paragraph the Doctor's lips became compressed, and he gave Harry another look, by no means reassuring. But when he arrived at the bit about the barbarousness of caning,

his face flushed, his brow darkened, and he said, "Greenfield, reach me my cane!"

Greenfield found the instrument of torture in its usual hiding-place and handed it to the irate Head Master. His fingers played with it nervously, and there seemed to be in the Doctor's frame a physical necessity for a sort of exercise which he always rather enjoyed as a convenient relief to the irritability which accumulates in a too sedentary life; however, he only played with the cane till he arrived at the end of Harry's composition, so that he got that little sugar-plum about the "*vir doctissimus*."

"Oh, so you end this piece of impudence with a sort of compliment addressed to myself, do you, sir? Probably you thought you had ventured farther than was quite safe, and hoped to mend matters with treacle. An ingenious idea certainly, but do you think I look the sort of person likely to be mollified by flattery, eh?"

Harry looked at the Doctor, and certainly it seemed as hopeless to soften such a being by smooth words as if he had been an angry bull in the middle of the big field at Bilsbury. And yet such is the weakness of human nature that the Doctor *was* mollified internally by the little flourish about the "*vir doctissimus*," and the cane was *not* used, and the Doctor even added some suggestions about the Latin in a tone that became gradually amiable. Besides, he felt there was some justice in Harry's observation, and he wanted to know more about fagging as practised in his own school, so he sent the other lads away when he had looked over their work, and kept Harry to question him. Harry simply narrated his own experience, and Dr. Templeman grunted from time to time "Too bad that, certainly, much too bad!" At last he said, "I will see to this matter myself for the future."

"And now, you young reformer, before you go," he added, "just let me tell you something about caning. I never caned you yet, did I? though you were precious near it a little while since for your impudence. I am not much in the habit of caning, but it is useful under certain circumstances. There *must* be punishment of some kind, to keep up the discipline of a school. I might deprive a boy of food and exercise, I might make him do punishment work. But both these plans of punishment are more injurious to a boy than a little smart caning is. So I rather think that notwithstanding your observation on 'barbarity I shall just keep this instrument at hand for occasional service. When next you write a Latin essay upon barbarism, you may observe that a good deal of it lingers even in civilization itself, and I give you my full permission to cite me as an example of this, if you want an example. You may say, if you like, how remarkable it is that in such a civilized place as Brambleby there should yet exist one barbarian, and that this one should be a teacher of youth. Now you may go, and good-night to you!"

The Doctor said this very kindly, and when Harry had left the room the Head Master thought to himself—"I like that boy, he is bold and honest, and I'm sorry Selby used him so badly. Really, some of these young fellows pass all bounds when they have the uncontrolled exercise of a little power. I'm afraid I've not quite done my duty about these matters, but I *will* do it, though the lesson comes to me from a lad like that."



## CHAPTER X.

### MEUM AND TUUM.

It happened that Harry Blount possessed a writing-desk which his grandmother had given him, and this desk was on a shelf in the school-room at the end of the play-ground or garden. The boys went into the school-room at all hours, and one Saturday afternoon, as it seemed likely to rain, they had not gone out as usual. Harry went into the school-room and found Wade there alone with Harry's own desk open before him. James Wade was tranquilly occupied in examining all the details that the desk contained, and amongst the things he did he read Mrs. Blount's letters.

"This is cool!" exclaimed Harry in much amazement.

Wade did not seem in the least disconcerted at being found out, but gave a glance at Harry and went on with his examination as tranquilly as if the desk had been his own. At last he opened one of those "secret drawers" which anybody can find out, and began to handle several precious little objects that constituted Harry's most private treasure. Amongst these was a beautiful gold seal with a plain onyx, rather a large seal, worth perhaps four guineas. When James Wade found this, he first looked attentively at the plain stone, and then coolly put the seal into his

own pocket, without any attempt at concealment or sleight of hand. This done, he left the desk open, and the things scattered about, and immediately quitted the classroom.

Harry's first impression was that the affair was a stupid practical joke. "At any rate if I complain," he thought, "Wade will simply tell the Doctor that he had played me a little trick, and the Doctor will be vexed with me for troubling him about a trifle, so I will say nothing for the present." Making this resolve he put his desk in order again, and thought how he might best for the future keep it safe from inquisitive intruders. Several days passed, and Harry said nothing about the seal either to Wade or anybody else. At last, the next Saturday, just a week after the incident of the desk, he went to Wade on the cricket-ground, and said, "If you have done with that seal you borrowed of me I should be much obliged if you would return it." This was putting the matter as politely as Harry's tact enabled him to do it, but people who are constituted like James Wade do not particularly appreciate tact in others, and all he felt was a disposition to impute Blount's civility to fear. However this may be, the only answer Harry got was a stare, and *such* a stare, a cool, prolonged, contemptuous, disdainful stare, as if Harry had been some far inferior yet curious little creature brought for the first time within the range of James Wade's clear gray eyes. "You know, that seal of mine," Harry went on after a pause, but Wade uttered not a syllable, whilst the stare seemed to double in intensity as the eyelids were lifted still higher and the whole round of each unflinching eye was disengaged from lash and lid. They looked like glass eyes, and it seemed as if their owner could do altogether without winking. At last Mr. Wade seemed

to be looking *beyond* Harry, and then at some object to one side of him, after which the eyes wandered away and their owner turned on his heel and went to join the cricketers. But not one word did he condescend to utter.

Harry had never felt as much galled in his life as he did on this occasion. Everybody at Bilsbury had been extremely civil to him, and he on his part had acquired the habit, from childhood, of being civil to everybody in return. His first experience of rudeness had been Selby's brutality, but then Selby was so much bigger and older that Harry felt no more disgraced by his superior power than a man feels disgraced by the strength of a tiger's paw. But Wade was near enough to Harry's own age for him to feel that there ought to be a sort of equality between them, and it is easier to bear tyranny than contempt. Wade's manners, too, were uniformly insupportable. He was not a gentleman, and never by any possibility could grow up into being a gentleman. He was a boor, but a strong and handsome boor, and his father was a rich man, and prouder than any peer in the House of Lords. James Wade had all his father's pride, and his bad manners.

But what could Harry do? For the present he had nothing to do but bear it, unless he complained to Dr. Templeman, which he did not like. But the next day something occurred which made Harry come to an immediate decision.

The boarders at the house of the Head Master all went to Brambleby old church on Sunday, and on these occasions there was a certain rivalry in dress. One or two of the boarders, sons of professional men who lived in large towns, were dressy in the extreme, and thought as much about their toilette as fine ladies do about theirs. They wore the finest and glossiest of cloth, they had the prettiest

waistcoats, and they shone especially in neck-kerchiefs, which at that time were not the insignificant little bits of ties that have since come into fashion, but handsome and voluminous things in coloured silk, that it was a pleasure to choose at the draper's, and which had as much effect on the costume as flags have on the costume of a ship. But the young fops at Dr. Templeman's shone especially in watch-chains and the trinkets that a watch-chain might be made to carry, and since the fashion was to have these chains as heavy and substantial as possible, there was no end to the ornaments with which they might be loaded. One young gentleman, the son of a rich attorney at Leeds, possessed a bunch of toys that would have amused a baby for a week. There were little gold books, little gold trumpets, a tiny pistol, a cannon, a sword, and a microscopic locomotive. This lad set the fashion to the fashionables in the school, and they all sported trinkets equally useless, and not really very ornamental either. James Wade, however, had hitherto worn nothing but a simple silver chain.

Now on that fine Sunday morning after the incident in the cricket-field Wade made his appearance in a waistcoat of more than ordinary elegance, in evident imitation of the leader of fashion just alluded to, and across this waistcoat was a handsome gold chain, and an ornament was suspended from the chain, which ornament was Harry Blount's own privy seal. Thus adorned, James Wade marched bravely to church and heard the Ten Commandments with the air of a youth who had never violated any of them.

I am afraid that Harry was too much vexed and irritated to pay proper attention to the service that Sunday morning. He sat in the same square pew with Wade, and just opposite to him, and the whole of the time could

scarcely keep his eyes off the seal that dangled over James Wade's flowery waistcoat. "I wonder if the chain is no more his own than the seal is," Harry thought; "I wonder if the waistcoat is his own, or if he has stolen it from a shop-window."

After service, Harry went straight to Dr. Templeman and said, "Please, sir, I have a complaint to make about Wade. He took a seal that belongs to me out of my desk and would not give it back, and now he is wearing it with his watch-chain."

The Doctor was a good deal surprised—so much surprised that he thought there must be some mistake, and he told both Wade and Blount to meet him in his private study. First he heard Harry's account of the matter in detail, and after that he asked Wade for his defence. That young gentleman's defence was simple in the extreme. "Blount is quite mistaken about the seal, sir. It is true that I examined his own seal, but I put it back into his desk, and besides it is rather bigger than this. If you will look at this, sir, you will see that it is not his. My father gave it me last year."

The Doctor took the seal and exclaimed, "Evidently not, for it has J. W. engraved upon it, and Blount's initials would be H. B. You may both go."

They went out of the room, but the Doctor called Harry back again. "Blount," he said gravely, "I cannot say that this accusation puts your character in a very favourable light. To say the least you have been very precipitate in accusing your school-fellow of an action which, had he been guilty of it, would have been almost incredibly dishonourable. You ought to be extremely careful."

"But I saw him take the seal away, sir, and he never returned it to me."

Dr. Templeman looked graver than ever. "I am really sorry that you should still retain an impression so injurious to an innocent person. I do hope you are not knowingly making a false accusation."

Harry now saw that it was useless to try to obtain redress from Dr. Templeman, and he made no further attempt. Wade, who had been listening at the door, and distinctly heard what had passed, now felt perfectly at ease.

During the succeeding week, Harry often felt that the Doctor's eye was dwelling upon him suspiciously, and the Doctor was more than usually severe with him about his Latin. Harry knew that his work was as good as it ever had been, probably better, for he was making rapid progress, but the Head Master was much more severely critical than ever he had been before.

The first thing Harry did was to go and ask Calverley's advice.

When Calverley had heard the whole story he said, "It is clear that Wade has employed the interval in having his initials engraved upon the seal. Now I can easily ascertain through the Brambleby jewellers (there are only three in the whole town) whether such a seal has been presented for the purpose. It has been done very quickly and he must have lost no time, for I don't suppose there is a seal-engraver in Brambleby, and the seal must have been sent to Leeds or York."

"It isn't the seal I so much care about," said Harry, "but the whole thing vexes me so! I may not fight him because it's barbarous, we may not pump upon him because it's Lynch law, and the Doctor, who is Judge and Jury in one, acquits him unanimously, and looks at me as if I were a liar. In former times we might have had a good boxing

match about it, but we are so civilized now that there's no redress for anything."

"Yes," said Calverley, "and Wade would most likely have beaten you and kept the seal, which would not have been satisfactory either."

As to that matter of the seal engraving, Calverley soon got evidence enough. The principal jeweller in Brambleby had received a visit from Mr. James Wade on the very Saturday afternoon when Harry's desk had been rifled, and Wade had presented the seal unengraved, with the request that his initials might be put upon it as speedily as possible. The jeweller had gone to York himself on the following Monday and taken the seal with him, bringing it back, engraved, at the end of the week. Thus Wade had been able to appear with it at church, but would not have done so, in all probability, if the seal had not gained the protection of his initials. Calverley very much wished to communicate this information at once to Dr. Templeman, but Harry begged him to keep it for the present, and so the matter rested for some days.

## CHAPTER. XI.

### ON THE RIVER, AND IN IT.

HARRY had reflected that although the Doctor might have an objection to the use of the pump, and call it Lynch law, he could scarcely blame the boys for exercising another kind of power upon an offender, which would be at least equally disagreeable to him, though it might not involve the same risk of giving him a bad cold.

After Calverley's discovery of the facts about the engraving of the seal, Harry Blount called a council of his friends, and it was solemnly determined that Wade should be sent to Coventry until such time as it might please the said council to determine at a subsequent sitting. The rest of the school were easily brought to join in this determination, as Wade was not at all popular.

The first effect of his new position occurred about ten minutes after the resolution had been taken. Wade came to sit down on a bench in the garden where three others were already established. They immediately quitted the bench, and went to another at a distance. Then he began to talk to a different group, who turned on their heels and dispersed. Finally, he fixed upon an individual boy and began to tell him something, when the boy turned his back upon him and walked off at a rapid pace.



It was now towards the close of the boating season, but in the fine autumn days the crews still went upon the river. Wade had been admitted a member of the boys' crew, as he swam well enough to pass muster, but he rowed awkwardly, though his great strength made him of use in the boat.

A crew of four and a cockswain had been made up to take the boat that afternoon to a village about five miles above Brambleby. There was now a superfluity of members of the boys' boat club, and only one four-oar as yet, so that it had to be settled beforehand how the crew was to be composed for the day.

Wade said, "I shall go out in the boat to-day, it's my turn;" and as it happened, it *was* his turn, but the captain of the boat said curtly, "The crew is made up."

"It's my turn to go to-day, and I *shall* go."

"These are things for the captain to settle," said Greenfield, "and he has settled it. There is no more to be said."

"I have paid my subscription and I shall go in the boat. My money is as good as yours."

Harry Blount observed that according to the rules of the club, all disputes were to be settled by the captain so long as he was supported by a majority of the club, and when he was no longer supported he must resign. "But we support him unanimously on this occasion," he added.

The captain said, "With reference to Wade's subscription it is true that it has been paid in, but we have more members than we want at present, and if Wade likes to withdraw his money we are quite ready to refund it. I don't go so far as to ask him to leave us, but if he remains he must understand that he must obey the rules of the club."

Wade made no answer to this, but when the boys went

to the river, which they did immediately, he accompanied them in perfect silence. The boats were kept in a shed close to the water, and the captain had a key for this. When he opened the door Wade went in with the others and took hold of one end of the boat to help in carrying her to the river.

"Blount, go to the boat's head!" said the captain. "Wade, you must leave her. You don't go out with us to-day."

The captain's manner was so decided that Wade yielded so far as to quit the boat, but he seized an oar whilst the crew were engaged in putting her into the water, and she was no sooner launched than he jumped in and sat down upon one of the thwarts, and put his oar in the rowlock like a man who considers that he has a pull before him. The captain had now but one course to follow.

"Pitch that fellow out of the boat!" he cried in a determined voice.

The order was not an easy one to execute. Wade threw his oar into the water and clung to the thwart with both hands, all his courage and obstinacy coming into play as his anger became more concentrated. The captain got into the boat to help, and she quitted the shore unperceived during the struggle which now took place. She was light and rather crank, unfit for anything but well-regulated movements, and so it happened that in trying to get rid of Wade the crew upset her, and all went floundering into the water together, and in a place, too, where it was at least twenty feet deep.

In the confusion of the accident it was some time before the involuntary bathers could reach the shore. At last the captain got hold of the painter and towed the boat to the land bottom upwards, whilst one or two other fellows

brought the oars, and Harry, whose hat had kept on his head during the whole affair, took it off to bale the boat with it.

All this took some time, especially the baling, and the crew were too much occupied with their boat to think of counting themselves. When she began to float rather more lightly, though still waterlogged, Harry looked round him and said, "Has anybody seen Wade?"

"Oh! he's landed somewhere lower down."

"Did you see him land, or do you only suppose so?"

"Well, it's only a supposition, but it's very probable. He can swim, you know. He swam to be admitted into the club."

"I don't think very much of his swimming," said the captain, "I remember that he swam very little on that occasion, saying the water was chilly, and since then he has avoided bathing under different pretexts. We passed him as a swimmer more because he looked so strong than for any real skill he displayed."

Harry Blount had not waited the conclusion of these observations, but seizing an oar ran down the left bank of the river. Nothing was to be seen on the dark oily-looking surface of the deep water except here and there a little swirl caused by the motion of the river itself over some obstacle hidden below its current. Running very fast, he came to Mother Beeston's Pool and was luckily on the same side as the woman's cottage. The pool, as we have already had occasion to describe it, was a broad quiet reach of the river, and much the deepest place in all the neighbourhood of Brambleby.

Harry's recollections of Calverley's cord, and the use it had been to him, immediately suggested the idea that a cord might be useful on the present occasion, especially as

he had read that drowning people were very dangerous, and that it was most difficult to save them so long as they retained consciousness. Mother Beeston was at home in her cottage, and being a washerwoman she possessed a very long and strong clothes-line, which was the very thing Harry wanted. In a few words he made her acquainted with the subject of his anxiety, got possession of the clothes-line, and tied one end of it round his chest quite safely. Then taking the oar in his hand he said, "Now, Mother Beeston, just you take hold of the other end of the cord so that we may be ready if we see anything, and if I go under for any length of time you tug away till you bring us safely to land."

Mother Beeston was a stout strong woman of fifty, perfectly to be relied upon in an emergency, and not at all afflicted with nervousness. Notwithstanding the gravity of their purpose Harry could not help laughing at finding themselves so oddly associated.

"You're a fine young lad," she said, "as ever I see'd, an' it 'ud be a pity as you should be drowned, 'specially for tryin' to save somebody else. But never you be feared, oud Mother Beeston 'll mind you kerfly."\*

Whilst she was making this little speech, Harry did not hear a word of it. Something disturbed the surface of the water about thirty yards above the cottage. Harry believed he saw a human hand appear for an instant and as suddenly disappear. He gazed intently on the spot. Again the same object appeared, and this time there could be no mistake about its nature. It *was* a hand.

"There he is!" said Harry and ran to the spot in an instant, throwing the oar into the river as near as he could judge where the hand had just been visible. Then he took

\* Carefully.

a header, and coming up immediately, swam at once towards the oar which he seized, swimming without relinquishing it about the place where the hand had been visible.

Suddenly, yet not unexpectedly, Harry's ankle was seized with a grasp like a vice, and he went under, notwithstanding the oar. Finding himself held so firmly and so painfully he instinctively attempted to disengage his ankle with his hands. The oar floated to the surface by itself and Harry was instantly locked in a dreadful grapple with James Wade, six feet below the surface of the water. Wade was far the more powerful of the two boys in an ordinary state, and now his strength was tripled by the terrible unreasoning eagerness of a drowning man. Harry felt himself surrounded as by the arms of an octopus, and pressed as by a boa-constrictor. He attempted to disengage himself, but all such attempts were utterly in vain, the deadly grip held him so firm and fast, and the two were going down together, wrestling and sinking at the same time.

All this took less than a minute, and Mother Beeston thought Harry was only diving in a voluntary manner; soon, however, she took the alarm and pulled at the clothes-rope with those stout good arms of hers that had never been more useful—useful though they had always been. Just then the boat came down the river at a swinging pace to see what was the matter, and the crew had the honour of assisting, in the French sense, as spectators, whilst Mother Beeston dragged Harry and Wade ashore. Wade did not relax his hold even then, he had become insensible. Harry was not insensible, but so exhausted that he could not stand, and fell when he tried to walk, after his companions had separated him from Wade.

Mother Beeston was never without a bottle of rum, and

a little of this revived our hero almost immediately. Greenfield had read somewhere the directions of the Royal Humane Society for the restoration of half-drowned persons, and these were applied to Wade, whilst somebody ran to Brambleby for a doctor. Before the doctor arrived, however, Wade breathed regularly and showed signs of returning consciousness. As for Harry he was seized with a fit of trembling, from excitement, and having been so long in his wet clothes, so Mother Beeston put him to bed and made him swallow a treacle posset, which certainly did him good, for the trembling soon passed off and was succeeded by a healthy perspiration that removed all danger of fever.

## CHAPTER XII.

### NEMESIS COMES UP WITH WADE.

"WELL, young gentleman!" said Calverley, when he found Harry in Mother Beeston's cottage, where he went to see him as soon as ever he knew what happened, "you have found a better way of taking vengeance on Wade than either fighting or pumping upon him!"

"I'm sure, I didn't think about taking vengeance at all," answered Harry, with perfect truth; "but as he was drowning, I did what I could to save him, with Mother Beeston's help, for she did half of it, and, indeed, saved us both. And, in point of fact, it's all due to you in the beginning; for, if you hadn't used the rope to prevent me from drowning myself the first time, I should never have thought of using one this time, as I did; but the rope gave me confidence, so I went in, and was not so much frightened when he got a grip on me."

Wade and Harry were not in the same room in the cottage, for there were two rooms. The surgeon thought they had better both remain there during the night, but he expected no serious consequences to either. Harry declared he was perfectly well, and wanted to go back to school at once when Dr. Templeman came to see him. Wade came round more slowly, and had his own reflec-

tions to make when he learned who had been the means of saving him. Let us hope they did him good.

Harry got up the next morning, feeling rather stiff and tired, but not any the worse otherwise, and he went back to Dr. Templeman's at once. Wade came back two days later, and it had been agreed, at Harry's suggestion, that his condemnation to Coventry should be considered at an end, in order to give him a fair opportunity for entering into cordial relations with every one if he were so disposed. All the boys went and shook hands with him, and hoped he was none the worse. The captain of the boat made some apology for his order to pitch him overboard. "I quite forgot you were not a very good swimmer," he said, "though I had noticed something of the sort when you first swam in the river. This time, too, you were no doubt much more embarrassed on account of your clothes."

Wade's behaviour was characteristic. He said very little, and did not seem to know whether he ought to be angry with the crew of the boat, or accept their advances in friendliness. Englishmen are always awkward hands at making pretty speeches in private life, though they do it sometimes very cleverly at a public dinner-table, and a Yorkshire boy like Wade has this defect in a pre-eminent degree. It is a positive fact that he never once thanked Harry Blount. He was very near doing it once or twice, but the little speech seemed a very awkward one to make to a boy whom he had looked upon as his enemy. He was several times on the point of saying, "I say, Blount, you saved my life; well, thank you, I'm much obliged to you," but somehow he couldn't manage it. However, he did something else; he took the little bunch of trinkets that he had worn with his watch on Sundays,



and offered it to Harry as an expression of his gratitude. Harry took the bunch, detached his own seal, and returned the rest. Then Wade pressed him to accept them, in a manner that was intended to be bluff and hearty, as his father would press a friend to drink more port after dinner. Finally, not to appear irreconcilable, Harry accepted one tiny seal that had really belonged to Wade, a thing of scarcely any appreciable pecuniary value, for it was not in real gold, and the stone was a common agate.

Harry received many solemn congratulations, which he always laughed off by saying that Mother Beeston was the real heroine of the affair, for without her he could have done nothing; and then he gave such ludicrous descriptions of her intervention that he usually succeeded in diverting the attention of his hearers from his own share in the matter. The "Brambleby Courier," a small weekly, gave a flourishing account of Harry's conduct, and the paragraph was copied into the "Leeds Mercury," where it attracted the attention of a subscriber to the Royal Humane Society, who applied for a medal for Harry, which was sent to Dr. Templeman, and by him delivered to our hero, with great solemnity, in the Grammar School, the mayor and several other Brambleby notables being present on the occasion. Harry wrote himself to thank the society for the medal, and in his letter gave such an account of Mother Beeston that the society sent her a donation of three guineas. There can be no doubt that Mother Beeston had been of the greatest use, still Harry somewhat exaggerated her merits, for she really did nothing but carry out his own very simple directions.

It happened, some days after these events, that Harry's class was reading Latin to Dr. Templeman in his private study, and when it came to his turn, there was some-

thing in the text that needed a master's explanation. The Doctor accordingly made his commentary on the passage, and whilst he was talking he looked first at Harry's face and then at the book he held, and finally at his waistcoat. His eyes rested for some time on the seal, but his mind was still fully occupied with the subject of his own philological discourse. At length the mere ocular impression began to convey something to the Doctor's mind, and he recollected that affair about the initials. "Come nearer to me, Blount," he said; and when Harry was close to the Doctor's easy-chair, the latter got hold of his seal, and began to examine it with the help of his spectacles. "Why, this is Wade's seal that you and he had a dispute about. You fancied he had taken it out of your desk, I remember, and you maintained it very stoutly, too, till he proved the contrary by showing his initials upon it. I suppose he has made you a present of it, after the service you rendered him in the river."

Now there was a good deal in this little speech that it was utterly impossible for Harry Blount, with his bold truth-loving temper, to endure or accept for an instant. He felt no anger against Wade now, and did not wish to do him any harm, but he was not going to put up with the imputation of having accused him falsely. With his natural love of justice, he wished for justice as much for one person as another, without favouring himself, for that would not be justice, yet without excluding himself, for that would not be justice either. So he at once firmly resolved to make the Doctor hear over again the plain truth about the matter, whatever the consequences might be, either to Wade, or anybody else.

"I beg pardon, sir," he said, stoutly, "Wade gave me this little seal, but he did not give me the one with

the initials, he only restored it to me ; it never was his to give. All I said about it before was quite true. It was mine when I came to Brambleby. Wade took it, and now he has given it back."

"But how can it have Wade's initials, if this account is true?"

"He got them engraved on the stone."

"So you suppose, but it is a mere supposition, and I must remind you that you have no right to affirm such an injurious conjecture as if it were a fact."

Harry now found himself placed in a painful dilemma. Either he must submit to the imputation of having expressed an injurious supposition about Wade, as if it were a fact, or else he must go through with it, and show that it was not a supposition at all, which might have unpleasant consequences for Wade. Here, again, the love of justice decided the question, and it is only fair to him to say that if justice had required him to confess a fault of his own, he would have done it much more willingly than he exposed the fault of another.

"It is not a supposition at all, sir. It is a fact."

"So you say, so you say," the Doctor replied in irritation ; "but you can't prove it. A fact, to be admitted, must be proved. Now how can you prove that Wade got the letters engraved?"

"Mr. Paynell, the jeweller, in High Street, could give you some information about that, sir."

The Doctor looked surprised at Harry's pertinacity, but said nothing further about the matter, and went on with the work of the class, but the next morning, as he was walking down to the Grammar School, he did not fail to look in upon Mr. Paynell, who had a very interesting and handsome shop that it was always a pleasure to enter.

The jeweller's evidence was conclusive. Wade had brought him the seal quite plain, and had urgently requested that the letters might be engraved upon it without delay.

Now, if Wade had been drowned, he would have escaped the Nemesis that was now closely pursuing him. Nemesis does not always follow immediately upon the guilty act, so that death, as to this world at least, is often a door of escape by which the guilty get out of the way of Nemesis before she comes up with them; but if you are to live on, let us hope that Nemesis is not after you, for the longer you live the more probable it is that she will come up with you in the end, and punish you.

When Dr. Templeman entered the Grammar School, he was considerably flushed, and after the usual preliminaries to the day's work, he mounted the little platform that supported his seat and desk, and the boys knew at once that he was going to make a speech, a thing which he only did on very exceptional occasions. The speech was as follows:—

"I have just obtained conclusive proof that one of you is a thief, or rather, I should say, a robber, with the craft of a swindler besides. His name is James Wade. Wade, stand out in the middle of the floor. You need not attempt to defend yourself, and I don't think you will say much when you know that I have just come from Mr. Paynell, the jeweller's."

Wade remained silent, but turned deadly pale.

"Now, I had thought at first that the only way to deal with such a fellow as that was to expel him without a moment's delay; but when I reflect that such a course might be very agreeable to him, by lengthening the approaching holidays, and very painful to his father and

mother, who are perfectly innocent of his crime, I feel disposed to punish him first, at any rate, and let him remain with us afterwards on trial. Wade, come back to the house with me."

The Doctor returned at once to his own residence, followed by James Wade, at a distance of about six yards in the rear. The events which followed may well be the subject of a separate chapter.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### IN THE DOCTOR'S STUDY AND ELSEWHERE.

THE good people of Brambleby who met the Doctor with Wade at his heels like a small boat towed irresistibly by a ship, were perfectly well aware of what was likely to follow. The Doctor was still red with anger and his pupil pale with fear. There was something too in the Doctor's gait, more energetic than usual, which implied a stern resolve. He planted his feet so firmly on the causeway that the stones themselves would have known that he was in a state of excitement if they could have thought about it.

When they came to the house of the Head Master, Wade was going to enter as usual by a little side-door that led into the playground, for this was the boys' entrance, but the Doctor said with a mock politeness that seemed very terrible—"Mr. Wade, I beg that you will do me the favour to enter by the front door this time."

Then he opened the door with his latch-key and very courteously ushered Wade into his study, exactly as if he had been some gentleman from the neighbourhood, come to pay the Doctor a visit.

I have no doubt that James Wade remembers that study just now wherever he may be, and if he lives to extreme

old age, I have no doubt that he will remember it still. He will always retain a vivid impression of the mahogany table, covered with morocco leather, the large, heavy easy-chair, the book-cases in recesses on each side the fire-place, the small marble bust of Cæsar on the chimney-piece, and the large bow-window that looked out upon one of the quietest streets in Brambleby.

In one of the corners of the room was a folding-screen. Wade remembers the screen, too, very likely. It had some Chinese figures pasted on it by some female relative of the Doctor's.

Dr. Templeman began by removing his gown, which he laid on the easy-chair. Next, he removed his coat, and appeared in his shirt-sleeves. As is the case with all very powerfully-built men, the Doctor looked stronger and stronger as he divested himself of coverings. His gown gave him a gentle academic appearance, and made you think of his mental culture and attainments, but if you had seen him, as Wade did, in his shirt-sleeves, your first thought would have been, "I should not like that man to give me a blow with his fist."

He put his hand behind the screen with the Chinese figures and drew from thence a cane, which he examined carefully. The result of his examination did not appear to be quite satisfactory, for he put the cane back, and rang the bell. When the servant came, he took a shilling out of his pocket, and said, "Go and buy me a new cane at the saddler's, and tell him I want a particularly good one this time. He knows the sort." Then to Wade: "Pray take a seat, Mr. Wade; I am sorry to have kept you standing."

They waited so a quarter of an hour, the Doctor seated in his easy-chair, tranquilly reading the newspaper, Wade

seated on the corner of one of the other chairs, with full leisure to meditate on what was going to happen. He was not keenly sensitive to rebuke, and it would have been difficult to make him suffer morally by any public disgrace, but he did not like pain at all, and had not much courage to endure. Had the Doctor simply lectured him, and called him a thief or a swindler before the whole school, he would have borne it easily enough, and eaten his dinner after it as heartily as ever, but this new cane was a different matter.

At length he heard the step of the servant on the stair. She tapped at the door, and entered with the new instrument of torture. In going out, she cast a glance and a smile at Wade, which he perceived to his displeasure. But he had little time to think of anybody but the Doctor.

The newspaper was now cast aside, and a fearful smile illuminated the Head Master's features as he grasped the cane and examined it. "This will do!" he said grimly. The fact is, he deeply enjoyed the infliction of corporal punishment upon delinquents. It was capital exercise, and his muscles enjoyed exercise, and besides that, his moral sense was satisfied by the idea that a sinner got his deserts.

Shall I describe Wade's punishment in all its details? No, I prefer to pass over it rapidly, not enjoying these things quite so much as Dr. Templeman did. The infliction must have been very sharp, for the howls of the victim were audible all over the house. The Doctor worked himself up into a steadily-increasing fury, the cane-strokes became sharper and sharper, till at length Wade could endure it no longer, but opened the door and



rushed into the dining-room, where there was a long table laid for the boys' dinner.

Everybody knows how difficult it is to catch a boy when he has got a table between him and his pursuer. One boy *may* possibly catch another under such circumstances, but a man, especially a bulky man, could *never* catch a boy with such an advantage in his favour. Wade perceived this at once, and made the best possible use of the table, which was a broad one as well as a long one, and the Doctor, who ran this way and that till he was out of breath, could no more get at his victim than if the Thames had flowed between them. He occasionally attempted a stroke across the table, but never once hit Wade; all he did was to upset and break two or three of his own glasses, which did not add to his good-humour.

The boy began to reflect, however, that his enemy would probably soon call for assistance; and although one man cannot catch a boy with a long table to defend him, it is as easy as possible for two men to do so. Therefore, Wade first contrived to lead the Doctor to that side of the table which was opposite the door of the room, and when he himself was close to the door, he suddenly bolted, slamming it after him. In an instant he was in the playground, though he had to descend a staircase, and open two other doors, but he took care to shut these also.

There was an exit from the playground through a wash-house at the opposite end, and Wade ran there as fast as he could. But when he came to the door by which he had hoped to escape into the fields behind, he found that it was locked, and the key was not in the lock! What was to be done? The Doctor's voice was already audible in the playground, loudly asking the servants which way the boy had gone. There was not an instant to lose, and

it was no longer possible to go out of the wash-house and choose any other place of concealment. Glancing quickly around him, Wade could see nothing to hide in, and the Doctor's voice became louder and louder as he came to that end of the ground. Suddenly a bright idea entered Wade's brain, under the influence of his excitement.

There was a large copper in the wash-house to boil linen in, a fixture, built round with brick, and having a fire-place under it. The copper had also a wooden lid. What if he were to get into the copper? Would it be big enough to hold him? The Doctor was now within a few yards of the wash-house, and if the copper was to be tried at all it must be tried at once. There was water in it, two feet deep, but this did not prevent Wade from getting into the copper and carefully drawing the lid over his head. An instant after, the Doctor was in the wash-house, followed by two of the servants.

"I heard a noise in this place just now!" said Dr. Templeman. "He must be here!" But though both he and the servants sought with the very greatest care, they found no Wade; for it never occurred to them to lift up the lid of his hiding-place. The youth was not comfortable, either in mind or body; the water was very cold, and he distinctly heard his enemies seeking for him—enemies, I say, in the plural, for the servants were not fond of him either, and would have betrayed him in an instant had they guessed where he was hidden. If Harry Blount had been in the copper he would have been perfectly safe, so far as they were concerned, and under present circumstances their perspicacity was more to be dreaded than the Doctor.

As the reader knows where the young gentleman is hidden, it is useless to trouble him with the details of a fruit-

less search. Dr. Templeman, being at last convinced that Wade was not on the premises, concluded that he had escaped by the side-door into the street and had taken the road to his own home, which was about thirty miles from Brambleby. "I shall trouble myself no more about him," said the Doctor, "but if he has left my house he shall never come back to it again."

Hours passed and dinner-time came, and the Doctor as usual enjoyed his meal very heartily. After dinner, he had a glass of port wine in his own study, and the pleasant feeling of comfort brought on by his repast and the good old port, softened his heart considerably towards Wade. "After all," he thought, "perhaps I *did* give it him rather strong. I see that cane is all in pieces. I get rather too much heated and excited by the work, and don't sufficiently remember that my arm is not quite like a child's." Then came another glass of port and another reflection. "Upon my word, I begin to feel very anxious about the poor boy; I should like to drive a few miles on the road towards where he lives, so as to bring him back safely, or at least get some news about him." Then he rang the bell and ordered his gig. The Doctor did not keep a vehicle of his own, but there was an inn just over the way where they had a gig to let out on hire which he always used, so it was called Dr. Templeman's gig.

We now leave the Doctor bowling along the high road with rather an anxious mind, and return to the inhabitant of the copper. He was in the position which Cardinal Balue must have assumed in his cage, and a very uncomfortable position it is, if you have to remain in it for any length of time. Wade was not likely to be kept so for eleven years like the victim of Louis XI., but he had an additional inconvenience unknown to the worthy cardinal,

and that was the presence of so much cold water. It came up to his knees and chest ; his hands and arms were immersed in it, and if there was no danger of drowning there was another danger scarcely less serious, that of perishing ultimately from cold. Besides this, Wade began to feel extremely hungry, not having been at his usual place during dinner-time, a matter of vast importance to him, for he had a great appetite and his stomach abhorred a vacuum. All the other boys had gone down to the grammar school again after dinner, and there would not be the faintest chance of communication with any one of them until a quarter-past five in the evening. The prospect before the fugitive was therefore sufficiently dreary. He must remain where he was for three hours yet, before he would have a chance of getting any news about the Doctor's state of mind, or any help towards completing his escape from the premises. He congratulated himself on his good luck in having found such a capital hiding-place, but his feelings of self-congratulation were a good deal damped, not to say wetted, by the liquid element that surrounded him. As for quitting the copper, he had not courage enough to think of it. The terrible image of the Doctor *furioso* was much too vividly impressed on his recollection, and the marks of a certain magic wand were too recent upon his body.

About three in the afternoon the housekeeper and scullery-maid entered the wash-house together. "Patty," said the housekeeper, "just you make a fire under the copper, whilst I sort the linen."

"Must I put any water in the copper?" Patty inquired.

"No, not a drop. It's more than half-full already, and if you were to put any more it would take too long to heat."

Wade heard Patty busy herself about lighting the fire.

Water and metal are both excellent conductors of sound, and every scratch of the shovel and poker in the little furnace just beneath him came up magnified to his ears. "Well, this is pleasant!" he thought, "now I am to be boiled like a lobster!" However, on reflection it occurred to him that it would be quite time enough to get out of the copper when the heat should become rather too much of a good thing. Certainly it would be a good thing, in moderation, as a relief from the terrible cold that had become almost past endurance.

The first sensation of increasing warmth was a luxury to James Wade, and the luxury became more and more agreeable as it grew more distinctly perceptible. At length it reached such a point that it was positively delightful! Like summer succeeding to a wintry spring it bathed him in a genial warmth all the more heartily appreciated for the wretched cold that had preceded it. But the state of perfect bliss, if ever it is attained by mortals, is well known to be a very transient state, soon succeeded by troubles and miseries of one sort or another. He was now in the full comfort of an English July, but he would not remain there long. He resembled the passenger on board a vessel bound for the antipodes, which gets every hour nearer to the Torrid Zone. But it is amazing what an amount of heat the human body is capable of supporting when it is brought to it by slow degrees. Wade in his present position was a remarkable example of this, and if any scientific person had been present with a thermometer, who knows but James Wade might have become an interesting subject of discussion by the Royal Society or some other learned body.

The heat was still bearable, but only just bearable. Wade was almost suffocated by the steam, and the per-

spiration ran from his face like the dropping well at Knaresborough. At length he came to the uttermost limit of human endurance. "I can bear this no longer," he thought, "I *must* get out."

Patty was just putting another shovelful of coals into the fire, when the lid of the copper suddenly stirred, then slipped over the edge of the copper and fell to the ground with a loud noise. Her amazement at this unexpected phenomenon was much increased when Mr. James Wade jumped out of his bath and stood erect on the floor of the wash-house streaming like a classical river-god.

Patty screamed, and would no doubt have fainted if she had belonged to polite society and had nerves, but the housekeeper did neither the one nor the other. She only smiled.

"I thought you'd come out at last," said the housekeeper, "and now you mun go straight to bed, and I'll bring ye a treacle-posset, which is more nor ye deserve."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CONSEQUENCES OF PRECEDING EVENTS.

THE surgeon who attended the school was called in to have a look at James Wade, and when he had heard the whole story, he said that the housekeeper deserved great praise for having lighted the fire, as the warm bath was exactly what was wanted to counteract the effects of the cold one. Besides that he praised the housekeeper for having sent the young gentleman to bed, and approved of the treacle-posset. Wade slept very well, perspired freely, and got up the next morning with a more than commonly good appetite for breakfast.

Dr. Templeman drove fifteen miles along the road and made many inquiries. Then he baited his horse at a country inn, and drove quietly back again, part of the way in a fine moonlight. His anxieties were set at rest when he heard the housekeeper's story, and it did him a great deal of good, for he laughed as heartily as an ordinary mortal, and quite forgot, at least for seven or eight minutes, his imposing dignity of Head Master. He managed, however, to look as grave as a judge on the following day, and made no allusion to the event, humorous or otherwise.

The boys would never have heard the story from Wade

himself, but the housekeeper, who had no affection for that young gentleman, took good care to tell it them, and you may be sure that it lost nothing in her narrative. Whatever had been ridiculous in the event as it really occurred became ten times more so in the housekeeper's sarcastic account of it. "If he'd stopped a bit longer," she remarked in conclusion, "he'd have been boiled just like a lobster."

This observation fixed a nickname on Wade which lasted during the whole of his sojourn at Brambleby school. Harry Blount called him "Lobster" to his face, and Wade wanted very much to answer with his fists, according to his earlier habits. Everybody took this nickname up, and before long Wade perceived that if he did not accept it quietly he would be left entirely to himself. So in a few days he answered to his new name without protest of any kind.

Lobster subsided into a position such as he had certainly never anticipated for himself when first he arrived at Brambleby. He was too dull to advance rapidly in his studies, and was behindhand to begin with. He could neither swim well, nor row well, and nobody thought much of his cricket-playing. But now let me tell the reader that Lobster was not altogether a muff, for it is often a very great mistake to conclude that boys, or men, are muffs because they do not shine in the two or three things that we ourselves can do. Certainly, Lobster did not shine at Brambleby School, but if you could have seen him at home in the holidays, you would have formed a very different opinion of his capacity. He had been on horse-back, or pony-back, from infancy, and was now a remarkably fine rider for his age, and sure to become, in six years more, one of those splendid horsemen for whom



the county of York is famous. Besides this talent, he had another which was likely to have a most favourable effect upon his future happiness and prosperity. From sheer love of the thing, and natural gratification, he had always taken such an interest in everything that went on about his father's extensive farm, that even now, at the age of fourteen, he was perfectly well able to look after a farm himself, and this implies a considerable amount of practical and theoretical acquirement. At Brambleby, Lobster was only a slow and heavy boy, who evidently could never, by any possibility, become either a scholar or a gentleman; but on his native soil, he was a fine type of the young rich farmer, destined to carry on agriculture upon a large scale, and with the most improved methods, whilst his amusement would be riding to hounds in a manner that many gentlemen might envy. His robbery of Blount's seal, and his indiscretion in opening the desk, were due much more to a total absence of delicacy of feeling, and a desire to vex and tyrannize over Blount, than to any instinct of thievishness or brigandage. There was not a trace of the gentleman in Lobster; but, at the same time, there was nothing of the sharper. There was a good deal of the snob, however, of the genuine snob, who cringes to his superiors, and treats his inferiors as if they had no feelings to be considered. Very likely this may be a reason why the servants at Dr. Templeman's disliked him.

This snobbishness of Lobster's nature was strikingly illustrated by his remarkably submissive behaviour to Selby. Although Lobster was fourteen, and therefore rather old to begin fagging, Selby took possession of him with the greatest ease, and never had such a docile slave. He blacked Selby's boots, he lighted his fire, he brushed his

clothes, he willingly and gratefully accepted whatever payment Selby chose to make in the shape of presents. Lobster's master inflicted cigars and tobacco upon him, but this only gratified Lobster, who had a great ambition to be a smoker, and willingly underwent the preliminary sufferings that no smoker ever escaped or avoided. In fact, he and Selby were as well matched as Calverley and our friend Harry, though their association was founded upon totally different principles. And I cannot say that Selby did much harm to Lobster, or that Lobster would have been any better, or any worse, if he had entirely escaped his influence. The young farmer went on his own lines, and was gradually developing his own character according to his nature. But there was one evil thing that Selby encouraged somewhat prematurely, though it is very possible that when Lobster was grown up he erred neither more nor less in that respect for any teaching or example that Selby was responsible for.

That evil thing was the love of what Lobster called "lush." That was his word for intoxicating drinks of all kinds, but most particularly for port wine, his ideal drink, his nectar. Lobster liked port wine as a baby likes its mother's milk, and he would imbibe as much of it as he had any opportunity for imbibing. Selby found a blamable pleasure in gratifying this passion of Lobster's whenever the opportunity offered, and the effects of it were sometimes perceptible enough.

Like everybody who has been much accustomed to riding, Lobster could not remain many weeks without an almost irresistible desire to feel himself in the saddle. This desire he found means to gratify by getting himself invited to a rich farmer's in the neighbourhood of Brambleby, where there were horses in abundance, and at

the same hospitable mansion there was plenty of good feeding and "lush." As his kind entertainer knew how much Lobster liked to be on horseback, he sent a saddle-horse for him sometimes on a Saturday afternoon, and the young guest returned alone on the same animal the day following, in time for evening church. The Sunday dinner was always very abundant, and so were the wines and spirituous liquors after it. The hosts were hospitable in the extreme, and Lobster was not the boy to refuse any hospitality, however urgent or excessive. In the class of society to which he belonged, hospitality tries a guest's powers of resistance to the utmost, and Lobster had no notion of resisting what seemed to him so perfectly right and agreeable.

On one of these occasions there happened to be present a very wealthy corn-merchant from York, who had cultivated a natural taste for port wine to the degree of unlimited indulgence both in quantity and quality. He would sit, and sit, and drink glass after glass, till there was no telling the quantity of glasses that he had absorbed. Now the decanter went round and round, and every time it came near Lobster he filled his glass like the corn-merchant above mentioned. Then ports of different vintages were produced, and it was necessary to compare them, and Lobster, who had a great ambition to become a connoisseur, went through these comparisons as carefully as his elders. It is true that from practice, and his heavy, unimpressible constitution, he could absorb a great deal more wine than most lads of his age without any apparent inconvenience beyond sleepiness or sulks; but on the present occasion he trusted his powers too far. Even Socrates himself might have been beaten by that remarkable corn-

merchant, especially in strong port wine, prepared for the British market.

Lobster felt no great inconvenience whilst he sat at table; on the contrary, the hours that had passed had seemed to him an Elysium of wine-bibbing, and he was quite sober enough to recollect that he must present himself at Dr. Templeman's to tea. So he looked at his watch, and rose to take his leave. The horse was ready saddled, and he had seven miles before him, and no time to lose. But when he got into the saddle he found it very different from the motionless chair at the dining-table. However, a good rider does marvels in the way of equilibrium, and Lobster was so good a horseman that he could ride whether tipsy or sober. He accomplished the distance in a remarkably short space of time, and duly arrived at the inn at Brambleby, where he was accustomed to leave the horse, according to his understanding with its owner. The animal walked into the inn-yard, but as the rapid motion was now over, and the wonderful effort of balancing relaxed, Lobster swayed from one side to the other on the saddle, and would certainly have fallen to the pavement without the timely help of a groom.\*

Being helped into the inn-parlour, Lobster sat down with the air of one who has not the least idea where he may be. The landlady, who was a good, sensible woman, came to have a look at him, and all he said was "Lush."

"He shan't have a drop in this house," she said firmly;

\* By way of anticipating criticism on this ride of Mr. James Wade's, the author of the narrative begs to say that he himself once witnessed a similar case, in which an excellent horseman, who was drunk, rode many miles in perfect safety, but fell into a groom's arms when he arrived at his own home.

"he's had quite enough somewhere else." And the worthy lady immediately sent for Dr. Templeman, who lived very near, and came in less than ten minutes.

When Lobster saw the Doctor, he said, with a hiccup : " Oh, it's you—Templeman—is it ? Well—just sit down ; no hurry ; sit down and have some lush ! I know you like lush, old boy ; I know you do—and you've got some good old port of your own—but nothing like that '32 port we had to-day ! I just wish—you'd been there—Templeman !"

The Doctor's horror and amazement knew no bounds. He was not in a position to make any allowances for the temptations of an excessive and somewhat vulgar hospitality, nor had he the least idea how much port wine Lobster could carry soberly, and how natural it was for him to trust his capacity a little too far. All he saw was one of his own pupils, drunk in an inn-parlour on a Sunday evening, half an hour before church time.

" You are a disgrace to your family and your school !" said Dr. Templeman ; " and I shall write to your father to-morrow. D'ye think you are able to walk ?"

" Walk, sir ? Can't say, sir. Never was much used to walking. But just lift me into a saddle, and I'll ride—ride—ride a steeplechase !"

However, Lobster made an effort, and stood upright, after which he walked pretty steadily, but with great effort, and followed the Doctor mechanically home. The next day, according to his promise, Dr. Templeman wrote Mr. Wade, senior, a letter giving a most painful account of his son's inebriated condition, but the same post delivered one from the young gentleman himself, which was as follows :—

"DEAR FATHER,

"The Doctor says he's going to write to you about me. Fact is, I dined at Mr. Shackleton's yesterday, and got screwed. Good lush, you know, and too much of it. But I rode well into Brambleby. All right now.

"Your affectionate son,

"J. W."

Mr. Wade, senior, having read both letters, pushed them across the table to his wife, and laughed in his own way. There remained in his mind a leaven of the old northern barbarian feeling which admired perseverance in drinking, and he was far from sharing those feelings of horror which Dr. Templeman expressed. Lobster knew his father, and counted upon that barbarian sentiment. The paternal reply hardly concealed a certain paternal satisfaction, and as Mr. John Wade felt some embarrassment about answering Dr. Templeman, and attempted it once or twice without arranging the letter to his mind, he finished by never answering him at all.

Such were the various influences under which James Wade was advancing towards manhood. They were not good influences in all respects, as we see, and for my part, as I take a very particular interest in Harry Blount, I am glad that a circumstance had occurred which prevented the possibility of companionship between him and this vigorous young farmer.

## CHAPTER XV.

### AT HOME AGAIN.

AFTER the dreary month of November, the days of which were marked off on almanacks as they passed, our young friends found themselves on the verge of the Christmas holidays. Then came examinations with a more than usually heavy amount of work, and after the examinations a day or two of relaxed discipline, and inattentive study, or half-study, with the eyes on the book but the thoughts at home, and then finally the joyous "breaking-up" when there was not another lesson to be learned for that year either in reality or make-belief.

Old Mrs. Blount arrived in Brambleby with her carriage the evening before, and when Harry saw that vehicle as it stopped at Dr. Templeman's door he stuffed his remaining things pell-mell into his carpet-bag—the big box was already crammed and corded—asked the servant to take them to "that carriage with the white horses," and proceeded to take a respectful leave of Mr. Barton and Dr. Templeman, and say good-bye to his school-fellows. Strangely enough, just at the last minute, Harry felt a little pang of regret at leaving the play-ground and the school-room behind the house, and though in a great hurry, he had time to feel embarrassed about one thing—should

he offer to shake hands with Lobster? There had been much coolness between them since Dr. Templeman had exercised himself in caning. However, Harry determined to err if at all on the right side, so he went and offered his hand with a cordial look and smile. But Lobster had not enough gentlemanly feeling to meet this advance in the same spirit. He put both his hands into his trousers' pockets where they were held very tight by the pressure of his fat person, and said simply, "Good-bye, Blount." Harry had not time to regret having offered his hand to Lobster, it was squeezed so heartily by half a dozen others, of whose friendliness there could not be the slightest doubt and Mr. Barton, who was very much respected by the boys in spite of his quiet ways and inferior position, said a few very kind and thoughtful words to Harry which he remembered long afterwards. Dr. Templeman was at the carriage-door talking to Mrs. Blount.

"Ah! here's your young gentleman!" he said. "I hope you will find him as satisfactory at home as he has been here at school." Mrs. Blount hoped she might some day have the pleasure of seeing Dr. Templeman at Bilsbury. The prospect of a visit from the Doctor did not seem quite so pleasurable to Harry, but he consoled himself by thinking that it would probably be a very brief one. "How polite he is to my grandmother!" thought Harry, "I hope he doesn't intend to marry her!" Whilst thinking this irreverent thought he said good-bye to the Doctor with the utmost respect and deference, for there is an inside and an outside to all of us, even the most candid and honest.

When they were quite alone together in the carriage Mrs. Blount took both Harry's hands and gave him a kiss on the forehead. And now it is time for us to make Mrs. Blount's acquaintance more completely than we have



hitherto had the opportunity for doing. Although she was sixty years old, and a grandmamma, she neither looked nor felt an old woman. She had clear intelligent gray eyes, a charmingly pure complexion, and an uncommonly high forehead. She wore her own brown hair, in which there may have been just three or four white hairs, that she could have removed in a minute had she condescended to any artifice of the kind ; and she wore her own teeth too, with the exception of two false ones in the front that she had procured because she had found it impossible to speak plainly without them. Mrs. Blount was a very perfect example of the provincial lady who had hardly ever visited London, and then only to see the sights, not to mix in the great world of society. There was a difference, certainly, between her manners and the manners of the aristocracy of Belgravia, and yet I think that any good and impartial judge of human nature must have seen at once that Mrs. Blount was as fairly entitled to be called a lady as she would have been after twenty or thirty London seasons. In a word she was not a town lady, but a country lady, thoroughly provincial, yet provincial in the very best sense, incapable of any kind of vulgarity, but belonging entirely to the soil that gave her birth. There are not very many of her sort left among us now, and it is a pity that so good and respectable a class should become extinct.

During Harry's absence at school Mrs. Blount had exercised a great deal of self-control, and had seen him only once, at Brambleby, for he had never come to Bilsbury during all the half-year. She had made up her mind that her duty was to give Harry proper opportunities for forming himself gradually into manliness, and she believed, with reason, that the presence of so tender an affection as

hers might interfere with the hardening process that she felt and knew to be necessary. The boy never knew during his boyhood how much she sacrificed for what she believed to be his interest, and the sacrifice was made ten times more painful to herself by the reflection that it must of course be misunderstood by him. Indeed one of the very first things he said was—

“You didn’t come often to Brambleby during the half-year, grandmamma.”

“I came two or three times without calling to see you.”

Harry said nothing, but he looked hurt.

“I did not wish to interrupt your studies too much,” Mrs. Blount went on to say.

“What did that matter, grandmamma? I could soon have got over the loss of an hour or two.”

“Well, at any rate, you will see your old granny every day at Bilsbury.”

“Not a bit too often, you dear old lady!” said Harry, the temporary hurt quite cured by her affectionate manner. And then he began to make inquiries about the inhabitants of the Grange, the servants, the animals, and especially about Billy his pony and Minimus his dog, so called as being the smallest dog at Bilsbury Grange, though he was a giant in comparison with the minute pets that are to be seen in London.

There is no pleasure in mature life like the pleasure of going home from school, for when a *man* goes home, however lucky and rich he may be, he always anticipates some sort of evil or care, always expects that something will have gone wrong in his absence, and the greater his possessions the more certain he may be that everything will not be according to his wishes. But a boy goes home with no other feeling than that of unalloyed gladness and

happiness, and the six weeks of liberty that lie before him seem a little lifetime of certain enjoyment. Harry kept looking out of the carriage windows, first out of one window and then out of the other, recognizing one village after another, and the streams at the bridges, and the comfortable mansions in their parks, and chattering incessantly the whole time, about the places they passed through, and about the school, and the pupils, and Dr. Templeman. He told the story of Lobster's adventure in the copper, to the great amusement of Mrs. Blount, who laughed at it till she could laugh no longer, but he omitted to tell about his own first swimming adventure and Calverley with his cord. It is fair to add, however, that on the other hand Harry made no boast about his prowess in delivering Lobster, but treated the affair very lightly as a matter of course. Still he felt a pardonable pride in showing the Humane Society's medal to his grandmother, along with one or two prizes that he had won at the close of the half-year by sheer industry and application, for he had not very much natural facility of the kind that enables a boy to cram himself quickly for temporary examination purposes.

And now they got very near to Bilsbury, and by twisting his neck a little, Harry saw the familiar little church amongst the trees, and the quiet little Vicarage, where Mr. Masham lived all the year round so quietly and so regularly, that he seemed as much a part of the place as the great elm close to the church, or even as the church itself. And then they stopped at the gate of Bilsbury Grange, and the old carriage soon rolled along the familiar avenue, and Harry felt himself *at home*.

The very first voice that welcomed him was the loud voice of Minimus, who barked before the door was opened,

at the noise of the familiar wheels. Little hope had Minimus of seeing his young master that evening; the poor little dog's heart had hoped and hoped for many a weary week, till, at last, his master's absence seemed to be the permanent state of things. What a pity it is one cannot make a dog understand that a short absence will be short, and a long one not eternal. The poor creatures can only wait and hope until they are able to hope no more.

But when Minimus heard his young master's voice, which he did with his keen ears even before the door was opened, he got into such a state of mind that doors and walls could hardly contain him. And when Harry stood in the hall, that tiny black-and-tan terrier made such a fuss that his young master could scarcely find an opportunity to say a kind word to the servants. He fairly ran up Harry three or four times, though only to fall down and try again, and he whined and trembled so that it seemed as if there was something painful in his excess of gladness. Harry went up to his own room, and Minimus after him, and when the two were alone together, they had a conversation in their own old way, the master telling the dog a great variety of things, and the dog pretending to understand every word that was said to him. One thing, at least, he did understand—namely, that Harry had come home again, and that was enough for the present.

Bilsbury Grange looked entirely different to Harry that evening from what it had seemed to him before. He brought fresh eyes to the place, and eyes that had been changed and educated by a new experience. The Grange was a large and comfortable house, admirably well-kept, and after the little iron bed in the somewhat crowded dormitory at Dr. Templeman's, his room at home seemed

immense, and wonderfully luxurious. There was a good fire in it already, and how big all the washing apparatus seemed, and how nice it was to luxuriate in unlimited hot water! For five months Harry had never trodden upon a carpet, except in the Doctor's study and dining-room, and it seemed to him quite strangely pleasant to walk on carpet everywhere at the Grange. In a word, he had many of the sensations of a poor boy in a rich man's house, but with the strange peculiarity, that it was his own house at the same time, and his own once-familiar home.

Like all country boys, especially those who have lived a good deal in the quiet of a large country house, where there is a very small family, Harry could bear solitude happily enough, and though it had been a good thing for him to see something of other characters than his own, still he felt it a great relief to have his bedroom to himself again, and be able to read when he liked, without any fear of interruption. There was his own little private bookcase in his room, which he loved and valued as much as any of his possessions, and there was rather a good library in the house besides, which had enabled him to pass pleasantly many a rainy day. These habits of reading had been almost completely suspended during his residence at Brambleby, for it is difficult to read when you can never count upon being quiet or alone, and now, as Harry's old self, with the old tastes, began to revive within him at Bilsbury, he felt that the time there would never hang heavily, but that every hour would be sweet to him in the old home, one way or another.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### BILSBURY GRANGE.

Now that Harry is at home again, and in the first full and pleasant sense of having nothing at all to do, except what suits his fancy, now that he is walking about the garden in the bright and frosty winter's morning, looking at the old place with a new delight, and a new appreciation of every charm that it possessed or that he imagined for it in his affection, it seems to be a good opportunity for telling the reader something more about Bilsbury Grange than he has been able to gather from the preceding narrative.

The oldest part of the house had been built in the reign of James I., and had the mullioned windows and picturesque mouldings of what is commonly known as the Elizabethan style of domestic architecture; there were also in this part of the house four or five gables surmounted by stone balls, which gave the place a good deal of variety and interest. But in addition to these old buildings a more recent possessor, in the reign of George III., had added a set of comfortable modern rooms in brick, with large sash windows and a front door, and it was this part of the house that old Mrs. Blount and her grandson regularly inhabited. The two kinds of building that together constituted the

present Bilsbury Grange were as incongruous as they possibly could be, and yet there was a sort of harmony in the whole, due partly to the lapse of time, for when we know that things have been a long time together it seems natural to leave them so—and partly to a luxuriant growth of ivy, which having begun to clothe the older building had spread half over the newer one, veiling both alike in the same pleasant covering of green. The inside of the house was just what you might expect from an exterior of this description. The newer rooms were spacious and furnished in the taste which prevailed just at the close of the last century, except for a few more modern things that had been added from time to time. The old mansion contained some remnants of old carved oak in three or four bedrooms that were kept for guests, and also in the library, but most of this part of the building was now used for servant's rooms and offices. The servants, however, were not numerous at Bilsbury Grange, for Mrs. Blount kept house on as moderate a scale as possible, and although she very often invited one or two friends, her hospitalities were never extensive enough to require any increase to her establishment.

The house belonged to Harry, or would be his on the attainment of his majority, and there was an estate with it that brought about eight hundred a year in his father's lifetime.

The reader may remember that, quite at the beginning of this narrative, Selby asked Harry what had been his father's occupation, and Harry's answer was, "A gentleman-farmer." This was the exact truth. Mr. Blount had farmed his own land, and besides this, had rented an adjoining farm of considerable extent. Agriculture had always greatly interested him, he had felt an occupation

of some serious kind to be necessary for him, and farming, as he practised it, supplied exactly what he needed.

Many gentlemen who farm for occupation lose money in the process, but Mr. Blount had managed better, and had saved the profits of the farm he rented, employing them to pay off a mortgage on his own estate. Few men in Yorkshire had been more thoroughly happy than Mr. Blount during these active and prosperous years. He had an occupation which gave constant employment to all his energies, he saw his estate flourishing, and as the mortgage was gradually reduced, felt that it would soon be his own again. When at last it was cleared away, he felt himself in a position to marry according to his inclination, and took for his wife a lady who had everything to recommend her except wealth, of which she had none whatever.

These two lived happily together for two years at Bilsbury Grange, and Harry was born there during that time. But at the end of these happy years an incident occurred which led to a lamentable consequence. The farm that Mr. Blount rented belonged to a nobleman of large possessions, whose mother had been the daughter of a Spanish grandee. From her he had inherited a considerable estate in Spain, and the income from this estate did not seem to him to bear any just proportion to its extent. So he thought, "If I could find any perfectly trustworthy Englishman, who understood agriculture thoroughly, I should like to send him over to Aragon and get him to examine my property there in every detail, and report upon it to me."

After seeking about for some time he hit upon Mr. Blount. "Blount is a clever and experienced agriculturist," he thought, "and a gentleman who will tell me the exact truth, and not have those intense prejudices against foreign



ways, merely because they are foreign, which a man of a lower class would be likely to have," so he invited Mr. Blount to visit him at a great house he had in Yorkshire, and there laid before him the whole business. "There is a house upon the property," he said, "which I hope you will use as your own."

After this, with a little hesitation, he added, "And about money matters I feel a great delicacy in making any definite offer, but if you would kindly accept a thousand pounds and all your expenses, I should still feel myself very much your debtor. Your first visit need not exceed two months upon the spot, and it might be repeated another year, or perhaps for several years on the same terms if they were agreeable to you. If Mrs. Blount liked to accompany you I would give orders to have the house specially prepared for the reception of a lady, and I have no doubt that she would be as comfortable as one expects to be in a foreign country."

To Mr. Blount this offer was tempting in the extreme. His interest in agriculture was not limited by mere locality, he was not simply a Yorkshire farmer, but truly an agriculturist in the largest sense, and with a great curiosity about foreign, as well as English ways. Then the work would be exceedingly well-paid, besides being work for which he felt himself perfectly adapted. The end of it was that he said to his wife, "If you will come with me, darling, I accept—if not, I refuse."

She saw that his heart was in the journey, and that it would be hard for him to abandon it; besides, the money was a great consideration for people who were only well-to-do and not wealthy. The idea of leaving the child was the only difficulty, but the mother got over this, trusting to the perfect care and affection of its grandmother.

So Mr. and Mrs. Blount left Bilsbury for Earl Wymondeswold's estate in Aragon—they left it, and returned no more.

A sea-voyage was thought likely to strengthen Mrs. Blount, who had been somewhat delicate since Harry was born, so instead of travelling by railway through England and France, they took the steamer at Liverpool for Santander. After a pleasant voyage they arrived duly at that port, and from thence travelled as directly as they could to Saragossa. Earl Wymondeswold's estate was beyond that city on the banks of the Ebro, which in fact flowed through it. Here Mr. and Mrs. Blount established themselves in what the earl had modestly called a country house, but which was a palace of stately size and magnificent architecture, with a fine gallery of Spanish pictures, and noble views of the distant city of Saragossa, with her towers, the Sierra de Moncayo, and even the remote Pyrenees. Mr. Blount applied himself diligently to his new duties, began a thorough reform in the administration of the property, and wrote long letters to the earl full of the most accurate and detailed information, such as that nobleman himself had never been able to gather when on the spot. He felt assured that in Mr. Blount he possessed exactly the agent that he so much required, and Mr. Blount on his part, saw before him a great amount of very delightful work. It was a noble property, fallen into a condition of neglect utterly inconceivable out of Spain, and the energetic Englishman saw on every side of him almost unlimited possibilities of improvement. He and his wife were compelled at first to rely much more upon an interpreter than was agreeable to them, but they had given every spare instant, from the day of their departure from England, to

the study of Spanish, and made progress in proportion to their efforts.

Amongst other pleasant dreams they thought of bringing Harry with them when he should be old enough, of the good the voyage would do him, with its perfect change of scene. But they were not destined to see their child again. They embarked at Santander for their return voyage, full of hope and happiness, and after some weeks the English newspapers began to publish ominous paragraphs about the Guadalquiver, the ship Harry's parents had embarked in. The papers said that she was overdue in Liverpool, and had not been heard of. Then began for poor old Mrs. Blount such a time of anxiety as she had never known before. Day after day came the now terrible newspaper, with either no mention whatever of the Guadalquiver, or else the same dreary repetition, but made worse daily by the increasing lapse of time. At last the papers said that the owners hoped no more, that a hurricane had swept the Bay of Biscay shortly after the ship's departure from Santander, and that she was now supposed to have gone down in it with every soul on board. After that the unhappy relatives of the passengers clung feebly to the wildest and most improbable suppositions. The ship might have been disabled, and drifted out into the ocean ; some Atlantic vessel might bring news of her or rescue the passengers. The neighbours said things of this kind to Mrs. Blount, but their looks and the tone of their voices showed plainly enough that they did not themselves believe in their own suggestions. At last the poor lady, after weeks of tears and prayers, went to Bilsbury church one Sunday clad in the very deepest mourning, and then the neighbours suggested nothing more about the unfortunate Guadalquiver. No human messenger ever brought

news of the ship, from that day to this, and no man knows where she lies and rusts in the tranquillity of the deep sea.

This is how it came to pass that Bilsbury Grange, instead of being populous with many children and governed by John Blount its master, was now so very lonely and quiet, with nothing but Harry and the old lady. To the boy, his father and mother were simply two water-colour portraits, happily good likenesses, that hung in his grandmother's private sitting-room, but to the old lady herself, they were still living and vivid memories. Even yet, she was often startled by the truth with which, in imagination, she could hear the voice of her son, and from thinking of the two lost ones so intensely at the time of her anxiety about the Guadalquiver, when the recollection of them was still so fresh and new within her mind, she had fixed it there permanently in the same freshness.

And now, as Harry was walking about before the house, followed closely and faithfully by happy Minimus, he himself being as happy as the dog was, and as free from sorrow or grief of any kind, old Mrs. Blount was looking at him from her bedroom window, and thinking of his present and his future, and of the past that lay behind him, with that one mournful page which you have just been reading in this book. "There he is, my poor Harry," she thought in her loving soul, "walking about all by himself, with nothing but that little dog, when he ought to have been the eldest of a merry little cluster of children, that would have welcomed him home for the holidays." And then she thought, farther, "I must not allow him to live even here without companions; it is not good for an active boy to have nobody to talk to but such an old woman as me."

When Harry had walked about the garden a short time, just to have a good look at the old place, he went into the stable-yard and visited the stable itself, where he had an especial object of interest. This was a colt of his own, four years old, that had been broken for him by a clever rider at Bilsbury whilst he himself had been broken in more or less effectually by Dr. Templeman, Mr. Barton, and Calverley at Brambleby, not to speak of that rough-rider Selby. We have already casually mentioned that Harry possessed a pony called Billy, but Billy was the small horse of his childhood, and Harry now indulged in a higher ambition, looking forward to horsemanship of a higher type than any that had been possible with Billy. When he went to the stable, Harry visited Billy first of all because it was the old pony's right, and the animal neighed in token of recognition whilst Harry caressed his old friend affectionately, but I am afraid that he was thinking all the time of the new colt which was in a loose box not far off. The said colt, whose name was Swallow, had improved wonderfully since Midsummer. He had been steadily ridden, regularly groomed, and treated as a civilized horse, instead of the rough half-wild animal that had run carelessly out at grass. Swallow had been selected as a convenient medium between the pony of early boyhood and the tall powerful horse of manhood; he was not a pony but a horse, still he was a small horse and very lightly built, indeed he was the son of a thorough-bred and a tiny mare who herself belonged to the aristocracy of horseflesh.

Harry was delighted with Swallow's appearance in the loose-box; he had never hoped that his colt would turn out so well. And indeed it is hardly possible to imagine a prettier sight than this young creature presented. Slen-

der almost as a young stag, and with large wondering, questioning eyes, he came at once to his master and held out his elegant little head as if inviting a gentle caress. I am afraid that Billy was sadly at a discount just then. Possibly he suspected something of the kind, for he neighed rather fretfully in his stall. Billy was in the position of the old-fashioned silver watch of a schoolboy, when a rich uncle has just made him a present of a gold one.

"I shall ride Swallow immediately after breakfast," said the young master of Bilsbury. And in passing the old pony's stall he gave him a caress in which there was just a little feeling of remorse. "I shall ride Billy a little in the afternoon," he went on as if the pony could understand him, "but I want to try Swallow immediately."

At breakfast, Mrs. Blount made an observation that was the result of her reflections upstairs, of which the reader knows something already. "Harry," she said kindly, "are there none of your schoolfellows whom you would like to invite here during the holidays?"

"Oh yes, there is Greenfield minor. And I should have liked to invite Calverley very much, but then you know he's a private and so much older than I am."

"Well, ask Greenfield whenever you like, and as for Mr. Calverley, perhaps some occasion may present itself which would afford a reason for inviting him. I should be delighted to show him some attention on account of his great goodness to you."

Harry wrote to Greenfield immediately after breakfast.

"I suppose you don't much care to invite Lobster?" said Mrs. Blount laughing.

"Why, grandmamma, we have not lush enough for Lobster."

"Lush! what's lush?"

"Port wine. He would drink up all that there is in the cellar."

This account of Lobster quite shocked and alarmed Mrs. Blount. "But then, you know, grandmamma," Harry continued, "we could put water in the big copper and give him a treacle-posset."

Just then Harry thought something was passing before the window, so he looked up, and beheld Swallow led by Jim, the groom, and adorned with an elegant new saddle and bridle.

Harry jumped up, and went to the window immediately. "Why, grandmamma," he exclaimed, "there's a new saddle!"

"That's a little purchase I made for you the other day, and I've something else for you, too." She went to a cupboard and brought out a very pretty riding-whip, with gold head and ornaments. "These are old granny's present," she said, by which Harry knew that they were paid for by herself, and not out of trust-moneys. He was perfectly alive to this distinction, and felt the liveliest gratitude to the old lady for even the smallest gift of hers, since he was well aware that her private income was very slender.

I may as well end this chapter, in which Harry's position has been more fully explained to the reader, by saying that he was a ward in Chancery. His father had left no will, and, after some inquiries, the Lord Chancellor had determined that Mrs. Blount should keep house at Bilsbury, and take care of Harry, for which she had an allowance from the estate, suitable, yet only just sufficient. Independently of this, however, the old lady possessed a small independent income, which sufficed for her personal wants. She had a scrupulous sense of independence, and

actually contributed from her own means to the expenses of the house at Bilsbury, in consideration for what she ate and drank. The surplus she spent in dressing herself, in little journeys, in charities, large in proportion to her means, and gifts to Harry, which were magnificent indeed, if you consider the resources of the donor. He knew that his grandmother was poor, but he did not know *how* poor, and yet he felt certain that this present of hers must have deprived her of some little luxury or pleasure that she would feel the want of. And the fact was that on one of her visits to Brambleby she went to the saddler's instead of the milliner's, and afterwards arranged some old dresses, with the help of a sempstress from the village.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### OF WHICH A HORSE IS THE REAL HERO.

MRS. BLOUNT felt anxious about the new colt, but had the resolution to keep her anxiety to herself. "It won't do for me to make a little girl of Harry," she thought, "so I must bear these anxieties, and can only hope that he will grow to be as manly as his father."

"Well, Jim," Harry said, when he got into the saddle, and was riding slowly towards the gate, "have you any particular recommendations to make about Swallow? I suppose I can ride him easily?"

"You'll ride him easily enough, sir, for he's very quiet, very quiet; but you'll find him uncommon free, and not so steady as an old horse: he's liable to shy at anything as is white; he can't bide white clothes hung up to dry."

"Well, then, how will he do if it snows this winter, Jim?"

"I suppose he'll shy first on one side, and then on t'other; and when he sees that there's snow all round, he'll just think it's no use, and stop where he is."

When they got to the gate Jim added, "Please, sir, I think you'd best not do very much with that there new ridin'-whip. But you may let him go free, sir, let him go free."

It was a delicious morning, one of those charming winter days that seem made for healthy exercise in the open air. The early frost had given place to a certain mildness, and the air was very fresh and pleasant. When Harry got upon a good road, suitable for trotting, he invited Swallow to try his paces, and was greatly delighted with the result. Having been accustomed to the paces of little Billy, which were scarcely more noble in the way of action than those of Minimus himself, Harry rejoiced in the good action of his new acquisition. Swallow stepped forward with great freedom and power, getting over the ground rapidly, and the motion was highly agreeable to his rider. There is such a difference in the motion of saddle-horses! Some of them have a chopping and checking motion, which tires the horseman, and makes him continually feel as if his beast were going to stop; others move with a lithe and supple facility that carries you forward without anything to annoy, and with little to fatigue you.

Swallow had no stiffness, no awkwardness, no unwillingness of any kind whatever. He went almost as softly as a greyhound, and the sensitive mouth answered to the slightest indication of the hand. If he had a fault, it was a constant tendency to increase his speed, but Harry restrained this with little difficulty. Occasionally he shied at some object by the road, and then broke for an instant into a gallop, but there was nothing in this to disquiet a pretty good rider. Harry rode fairly well for his age. He had plenty of courage and some skill, such skill as a country boy acquires by being constantly on pony-back, but he was not the horseman that James Wade was, either by genius or education. However, he felt confident that

he would never have the slightest difficulty with so docile an animal as Swallow.

He went a round of about nine miles, and on his way home again called to show himself and his steed to Mr. Masham at the Vicarage. The old clergyman was delighted to see Harry, took him into the same old study where they had worked so much together in times past, and instead of making him read Latin this time produced a decanter and gave him a glass of wine. He asked a great many questions about the school at Brambleby, did not seem at all to approve of the private pupil system, and said that there were not enough masters. "But then Templeman," he added, "is a man of uncommon energy, it must be confessed, and boys learn more under him than they do anywhere in the county except at York."

When Harry left the Vicarage Mr. Masham went out with him and had a good look at Swallow.

"Do you find that horse pleasant to ride?" he asked, with a dubious air.

"Nothing *could* be pleasanter."

Mr. Masham examined Swallow's face very carefully, and at last said, "Well, Harry, I may be mistaken, and suppose I am, indeed I do hope I am, but there is something in that creature's look that I don't quite like. It is difficult to say precisely *what*, for the eye seems honest and straightforward, and he carries his ears well too, but if he were mine, I should feel uncertain about him for some months to come."

"I wonder what on earth old Masham sees in Swallow, or rather fancies that he sees in Swallow!" thought Harry as he rode from the Vicarage to the Grange, somewhat disrespectfully to the vicar.

But I am no more able to explain Mr. Masham's im-

pression than he was himself. I know, however, that old people often perceive things that escape the attention of young ones.

There was once a young gentleman, for example, who was struck by the charms of a young lady, and he said to his old mother, "Mother, don't you think Miss D—— looks as if she had an excellent temper?"

The old lady answered, "I have watched her carefully, and I have perceived certain indications that I cannot possibly describe, but which make me feel quite sure that Miss D—— has in reality a dreadfully bad temper."

The sequel proved the old lady to be right, and yet her opinion was founded on little indications that had quite escaped her son. Perhaps, in the same way, Mr. Masham may turn out to have been right about Swallow; we shall know this in due time, but for the present Harry was rather angry at him for his suspicions, and considered that his fine steed had been calumniated without a cause. At any rate, he arrived at the Grange in a state of much more than perfect contentment with Swallow, and looked forward to many an hour of happiness in the new saddle.

Greenfield minor got a letter from Harry the next day, with an enthusiastic account of Swallow and his performance, that covered four closely-written pages of note-paper. The letter also contained an invitation to come to Bilsbury Grange and stay as long as he could, the invitation being very different from the formal affairs that are usual in refined grown-up society. There could be no mistake about the heartiness of it, and when Greenfield, whose father was a solicitor in Bradford, received his letter at breakfast time, he felt strongly tempted to start at once, and would most likely have done so but for his mother, who did not see very much of him, so Greenfield thought

it would give her pain if he were to set off for Bilsbury so soon in the holidays as that. He therefore promised to visit Harry in about ten days or a fortnight.

When the time was past, Greenfield went by train as far as he could, and then by coach to Brambleby. At Brambleby he passed by Dr. Templeman's house with mingled feelings of dislike and some unaccountable affection, and met Harry when the coach pulled up. As soon as Mrs. Blount knew the day of Greenfield's arrival she fixed the day before for one of her occasional journeys to Brambleby, so that Greenfield might come in the carriage from that place to the Grange.

It is time now to say a little more about Greenfield, whom the reader has heard of occasionally, during the half-year at Dr. Templeman's. He was a year older than Harry, but neither so tall nor so robust; he had a fair complexion with reddish hair, of the tinge which may be justly called auburn, and he had rather a delicate look, but his health was good.

This reminds me that I have never yet described the personal appearance of Harry Blount himself, for knowing him so well as I do, it never occurred to me that the reader was not so intimately acquainted with him. He had many things very much in his favour, but one of the best gifts he had inherited from his father, was a constitution in which there was not the slightest flaw or weakness of any kind. He was not particularly handsome, not having either a Grecian or a Roman nose, but only a common Yorkshire one, and his eyes were neither coal-black nor sky-blue, but only gray, and his hair was neither comparable to the raven's wing or floss-silk, but ordinary every-day brown hair such as nobody notices, yet on the whole it would be difficult to find a pleasanter face than Harry

Blount's face, for it was as honest and open as the daylight, and he looked as if he had never told a lie in his life, though we know that he *did* tell one, or something very like one, about that swimming business at Brambleby.

As for his body, he had twice as much muscle as Tom Greenfield, but without the lumbering heaviness of James Wade.

There were differences, however, between Blount and Greenfield which were to a considerable extent in favour of the latter. Greenfield had always lived in a town of considerable importance, and his father, being a solicitor in large practice, was especially well acquainted with the ways of the world, so that no son of his was likely to grow up dreamily, or to lose any time that might be actively occupied, whereas Blount, as we know, had been brought up at Bilsbury until he went to Dr. Templeman's, and had really seen very little of anybody but Mr. Masham and the servants. A town boy is almost always quicker and cleverer than a country boy, and Greenfield had a readier and brisker mind in some respects than Harry. For instance, he could beat Harry out and out in arithmetic, though this is only one instance amongst many in which he was Harry's superior.

Blount took all this in the most perfectly good-natured way, and had an admiration for Greenfield's superiorities that was entirely free from any such mean feeling as jealousy. He very often praised him to Mrs. Blount, so that the old lady was curious to see this new friend of Harry's and he had not been half an hour in the carriage before her opinion was quite settled in his favour. She had all along lamented that Harry had not a brother, and for his own sake she regretted the solitude of Bilsbury, though it was not distasteful to her, with her quiet tastes.

Greenfield's manners pleased her extremely, they were easy and respectful at the same time; it was nothing new to him to talk to a lady, for his mother belonged to an old Yorkshire family, and he had seen a good deal of society, young as he was.

When they got to Bilisbury, one of the very first things the two boys did was to go to the stable for Greenfield to make the acquaintance of the animals there, although it was dark and they had to get a lantern. The next morning immediately after breakfast, Harry ordered Billy and Swallow to the door, and invited Greenfield to have a long ride. He explained something of the geography of the country round Bilisbury, named two or three woods, several lanes and by-paths, and half a dozen villages.

"Why, Harry," said Mrs. Blount, "if you mean to go all that round you will never be back before tea-time. If you want to have the whole day to yourselves we can dine late, and you can take sandwiches and sherry in your pockets."

"As to that, grandmamma, Swallow goes so fast that it will be unnecessary to dine later than two. Billy will follow of course."

Everybody has a weakness of some sort, and one of the commonest of human weaknesses is the desire to show off an accomplishment that we possess or fancy we possess. Harry was not altogether exempt from this. He felt a novel pride in being so well mounted, and was not at all sorry to exhibit himself to such advantage in the eyes of a schoolfellow, a town-boy, who could not possibly—so Harry thought—be as good a rider as he was. By way of politeness, when they got to the hall-door, Harry said, "Greenfield, you take Swallow, you'll find him much freer and pleasanter than little Billy, he won't tire you half so much," but in reality he fully counted upon Greenfield's

refusal, and upon riding Swallow himself. It happened just as Harry expected, Greenfield firmly declined Swallow, and was soon in the saddle on the little pony. There was then nothing left for Harry to do but mount his seat of loftier dignity and honour.

"How far are we to ride this morning?" Greenfield asked when they were fairly on the high road.

"I suppose the round cannot be far short of twenty miles," said Harry, "but it is a charming ride, and we shall do it quite easily. We can bait our horses half-way, and take a rest. Come, shall we have a trot?"

He started with Swallow at a brisk long trot and Billy followed, almost breaking into a canter. Greenfield admired, Harry felt happy in being the object of admiration.

"I wish you would try Swallow," Harry said, "he goes so easily and he is as docile as can be, I can do anything I like with him"—and then came a little assertion of his own experience—"but you know I have always been used to riding, in the country one rides every day."

Just then Swallow ceased trotting rather suddenly, went half a dozen paces at a deliberate walk, and finally stopped altogether.

Harry was rather surprised at this unexpected stoppage, but he would have been much more surprised if he could have understood all that was meant by it. "Come along, Swallow," he said encouragingly, "what are you stopping for?"

The animal shook his head, and remained as motionless as Wellington's bronze horse opposite Apsley House, that finds the top of the arch a promenading ground quite extensive enough for all the exercise that it requires, whilst



the bronze warrior on its back has not the slightest apprehension that it will attempt the fearful leap before it.

Harry lost patience and used his whip very sharply and suddenly. To his intense astonishment Swallow did not advance one inch, but merely lifted the fore part of his body a foot from the ground, all in a piece as if he had been made of wood, and let his two hoofs drop down again exactly in their former places.

Greenfield had been carried twenty or thirty yards in advance by Billy's own impetus when Swallow came to a standstill so he turned round to see what was the matter, and then he came back to Harry, and remained opposite to him, but sufficiently on one side to allow Swallow to pass easily had he been so minded.

But Swallow was not so minded !

"I can't imagine what's the matter with this brute," Harry said angrily, "he never behaved so before. But he shall see whom he has to deal with ! Keep well out of the way, Greenfield."

With that he administered a dozen strokes of the whip in rapid succession as hard as he could lay them on. Swallow did as he had done before, only still more decidedly. He raised the fore part of his body all in a piece and let it drop down again. It was not rearing, it did not deserve the name of rearing, but it was a stiff movement quite beautifully and accurately expressive of the intensest obstinacy. At the same time, Swallow shook his head and switched his tail from side to side as if he had been troubled with flies, but with more vivacity.

Harry began to feel that he was not shining in the eyes of his young friend. He therefore tried the well-known experiment of turning Swallow round three or four times, after which he hoped the colt might be cheated into a

gallop. But it was of no avail. Swallow turned round, readily enough, as readily as a young lady in Sir Roger de Coverley, but nothing could induce him to pass the spot where he had first determined to take his stand.

Then Harry tried a new dodge. He rode back several hundred yards and returned at a rattling gallop. Swallow was perfectly obedient to these movements and as well in hand as any rider could have wished. But the moment he came to the old spot on the road, he stopped dead short, and so suddenly, that Harry was pitched out of his saddle on the horse's neck, the only wonder being that he did not fly over his head.

Now, there was nothing particular in that spot to make a horse stop there rather than anywhere else, at least there was nothing perceptible to a human being; but there is no telling what horses see, and I have often seriously entertained the notion that perhaps a horse may be troubled in his brain, and have hallucinations, as human beings sometimes have. Perhaps Swallow imagined that he saw just there, across the road, a toll-gate closed and bolted; perhaps he may have fancied that there was a yawning gulf in front of him, or a perpendicular wall of immeasurable height exactly before his nose.

However this may be, Harry could not get past the place, so at last he said, "It seems this is no go, Greenfield; but I think I could make him stir if I'd a pair of spurs. Would you just be so good as to ride back to the Grange, not by the front, but by the back road into the stable-yard, and ask for Jim, and tell Jim to give you spurs for me? There are two or three pairs that he knows of. Just look at the rowels, and fetch me the spurs with the longest and sharpest rowels."

Greenfield was not long in executing this little com-

mission. When he rejoined Harry, he put the spurs on for him, and then retired a few yards to watch the effect of these persuaders.

Harry advanced at a quick walk to the fatal spot, and as soon as Swallow stopped, which he did not fail to do exactly as before, Harry hit him sharply behind with his riding-whip, and at the same instant dashed both spurs into his sides. The effect was considerable. Swallow did *not* advance, but reared till he stood up on his hind legs, like a human being, and for one instant Greenfield trembled for Harry, lest the brute should fall over upon him, and kill him. However, our hero drew its head sharply down on one side, and when once on four legs again, made another attempt to pass the place, in the same manner as before. This time, however, an entirely new incident occurred. Swallow turned suddenly to the left, and before either Harry or Greenfield had any time to guess what he was about to do, the horse made a tremendous spring at the hedge, which was high and compact in that place, and just barely clearing it, landed in the field beyond.

Our hero was taken so unexpectedly, that he had no time whatever to prepare himself for the leap, and the sudden swerve was of itself enough to embarrass for a moment even a more experienced horseman than our hero could pretend to be. When he got to the other side the hedge, both his feet were out of the stirrups, and, as he was wearing spurs, he unwittingly spurred Swallow again, just at the very moment when it would have been most desirable to soothe him. Swallow became frantic, and plunged and kicked with great violence. Half a minute afterwards, he was galloping wildly about the field, with the stirrups flying loose and striking both his sides, the bridle-rein broken, for his foot had caught in it an

instant, and no rider on his back. Greenfield did not think of trying to take such a leap with little Billy, but he left the pony in the road, and went to succour his friend.

Harry was lying flat on his back, with both arms extended. He was in a state of complete insensibility. Greenfield did not feel at all certain that he was not dead. Evidently the first thing to be done was to get him back to the Grange, but how could it be managed? And how was he to break it to Mrs. Blount? Just then a farmer passed in a tax-cart, going in the direction of Bilsbury. His attention was first attracted to the pony Billy, and then he looked over into the field. As soon as he saw Greenfield bending over Harry, he stopped his tax-cart, and immediately went into the field himself.

"What, has summut 'appened?" he asked. "Whoy, this is young Mesthur Blount, o' Bilsbury Grange."

"Yes, and I want to get him there quietly without frightening his grandmother. He's had a fall from his horse."

"There's noa bones brokken, is ther?"

The farmer began to lift Harry's limbs one after another as gently as if he had been a sister of charity. Then Harry groaned, gave a great sigh, and looked about him.

He looked very much puzzled just at first, stared hard at the farmer, and evidently did not know where he was. At last his eyes rested on Greenfield. "Is that—you—Tom Greenfield?" he asked, very faintly.

Swallow was now quietly grazing, twenty yards from the little group. Harry perceived the horse, and then the whole thing came into his mind, and he understood his situation at once. "I know now; I have had a fall," he said. "But it doesn't matter; I think I'm all right. Let me see." He stretched out first one arm and then the

other, and finally asked to be helped upon his legs. He stood without much difficulty, and really had received no harm. The ground was soft, fortunately.

"Can you catch me that horse, please?" he said to the farmer, who soon brought Swallow.

"Th' bridle's i' tow,"\* the farmer observed; "but I'se mend it up a bit." He took a knife out of his pocket that was provided with a sort of bodkin, and also a piece of string. He made holes in the leather with the steel bodkin, and sewed the pieces together roughly with the string. This done, the bridle was as strong as before, but not quite so pretty to look at.

Greenfield satisfied the farmer's curiosity in a few words.

"I think I could like to try him mysel'," he said, "if young Mesthur Blount has no objection."

Harry at once consented, and the farmer, who was a man of considerable weight and strength, about forty years old, mounted Swallow, and rode him out of the field. He first borrowed Harry's spurs, and Greenfield picked up our hero's handsome whip, which he offered to the new equestrian, but the latter looked at it with a smile, and said, "Naah, it's too foine for me; I'se be spilin' it." So he dismounted, and went about seeking in the hedge till he got a stout piece of young ash, that he cut with his big knife in a masterly and expeditious manner.

I hope that our hero had nothing but good wishes for the farmer's success in his intended exhibition of equestrianism; but I will not answer for his feelings being so purely charitable as that. Older folks have often a rather contemptuous way of treating young ones, which is not altogether agreeable to the latter, and there was something in the farmer's manner, notwithstanding the kindness of

\* In two—a common expression to say that a thing is broken.

his intention, which said, as clearly as words could have expressed it, "This young gentleman has done what *he* could, now I will show him, and anybody else who chooses to look on, what a full-grown, experienced rider like *me* can do."

Farmer Pigott was really a very good horseman, and had followed the hounds, more or less, every season since he was quite a lad. It would have been no disgrace to Harry if Mr. Pigott could have conquered Swallow.

"Where did ye want to take him to, Mesthur Blount?"

Harry mentioned a village called Huddlestone, ten miles from where they stood.

"Well, shall I taak him to Huddlestone for you, *young gentleman*?" asked Mr. Pigott.

The expression "young gentleman" galled Harry considerably. It contained two seeds of bitterness. Harry knew well enough that the farmer, in using the word "gentleman," meant to imply that some weakness or timidity might be the result of gentle nurture, which so far made it inferior for the present purpose to the rougher training of a farmer. And he could not bear the word "young," because it was evidently intended to carry with it the idea of inexperience in horsemanship. Besides, Harry already felt lowered in Greenfield's eyes, and was not disposed to be let down any more pegs just for the present.

"You *can't* take him to Huddlestone," Harry answered, rather sharply; "for he won't let you."

Pigott pressed his lips together, and began to look very stern and determined. "What d'ye reckon him to be worth, Mesthur Blount?"

"About thirty-five or forty pounds."

"If I damage him, shall I be boun' to make him good to you?"

"Certainly not. Ride him wherever you like, and if you kill him, you shall have nothing to pay."

"That's nobbut reet,"\* said the farmer. "I reckon if I risk my own neck, it's 'appen enow for one time beout † riskin' forty pound beside."

This being settled, Mr. Pigott inquired which was the exact spot that Swallow had refused to pass, and then rode quietly for nearly half a mile in the opposite direction. Then he came back at a gentle trot, Swallow behaving apparently in the most good-tempered way. But when he arrived at the stopping-place, the horse suddenly came to a dead stand, exactly as before with Harry. What followed was merely a repetition of the old combat, with the same leap over the hedge—but this difference, that whereas Harry had been unhorsed immediately after the leap, the farmer kept his seat. Pigott then attempted a daring and difficult feat, he attempted to leap back into the road. This was utterly in vain, for Swallow refused every time, and refused too in a very dangerous way, coming up freely enough, but sticking at it just at the last, quite suddenly. Pigott, however, kept his seat admirably, and any good judge of horsemanship would have seen at once that he was an accomplished rider.

The next thing he did was to ride at a sharp gallop, parallel with the road. In doing so, of course, he very soon came across a hedge. The hedge was not very high in itself, but it was topped with hurdles a foot and a half above it. There was, however, a nice gap between the hurdles, and Pigott made for this. Then occurred one of those incidents that put horsemanship to a very severe test

\* That's nothing but right.

† Without.

indeed. Swallow seemed well in hand, and going quite nicely for the gap, but when he got there, he swerved to the left, of a sudden, and rose at the hurdles with a bound like that of a roe-buck. It was a tremendous leap, such as few men ever voluntarily undertake. It unsettled even Pigott for the moment, but horse and man alighted safely on the other side, and Pigott very soon recovered from his temporary disturbance. He went on galloping rapidly across the next field.

There was a boy in the farmer's cart, and Harry said to Greenfield, "This is well worth seeing. It is as good as a steeple-chase! Let us follow and watch. You come along with Billy, and I'll come in Pigott's cart." So he got into the cart, and they went along the road at a brisk pace, yet not so rapidly as Swallow was careering across country.

The road took a large curve here of fully three-quarters of a mile, and it was evidently Pigott's plan to cut off the angle, and get Swallow back into the road without the horse knowing anything about it till he got there. In this plan the farmer succeeded. He had to take several leaps, but Swallow did not refuse these, and he finally landed in the road without damage of any kind either to horse or rider.

When our young friends came up with the farmer he was riding along very quietly at a walking-pace, with the bridle lying on the horse's neck, whilst he himself occupied both hands in carrying his hat and wiping his forehead, on which there was a little perspiration.

"You reckoned this 'orse to be worth abaat forty pound; he's worth more like seventy if he could be reet well brokken. He's a terble\* 'un for leapin'. He'd leap ower a cottage house."

\* Terble, for terrible, used merely as a superlative.



Nothing could now exceed the apparent docility of the strange animal in question. He seemed in the best of tempers, and just such a creature as horse-dealers advertise as being suitable for timid riders, and gentlemen in delicate health. They went on for a mile in this way, and then Pigott said, "I don't doubt but what you could taak him to Huddlestone yoursel. He's quiet as a lamb. But I said I'd ride him as far, and so I shall, for whatever I says, I sticks to it, and I does it."

To get to Huddlestone from Bilsbury, the shortest way, as everybody knows in those parts, is to take the first lane to your right. So when they came to the lane Mr. Pigott tried to direct Swallow into it, but, for some undiscoverable reason of his own, Swallow preferred the high road, and would not enter the lane on any consideration. The resistance, this time, had some elements of novelty. Swallow did not leap the hedge, either on one side the road or the other, but he plunged violently, and reared and kicked alternately with such vigour that it was not very safe to be near him. There was a great battle between horse and man that lasted nearly an hour, but Pigott did not succeed in getting Swallow into the lane. At last he said to the boy in his tax-cart, "Thee go to our 'ouse and fot\* my gun, and see as it's loaded, and th' powther well rammed down."

The farm occupied by Mr. Pigott was only about a mile from the spot they were sticking at, so the boy soon came back with the gun. During his absence, Harry inquired whether the farmer intended to shoot the horse.

"I am nut sich a fool. There was a chap i' the Brambleby cavalry as lost patience wi' his horse, cos it 'ere stupid, same as youn; so he took out his pistol and fired

\* Fetch.

into its 'ead. Horse and man fell down of a lump, and when they come to look 'em up, th' 'orse were stone deead, and th' felly had his thigh brokken."

When the gun was brought, Mr. Pigott backed Swallow as nearly into the lane as he would go, and, having now his face to the spectators, just recommended them to remove his own horse and Billy up to a little distance, and then told his lad to come very near Swallow's nose, and fire both barrels into the air.

When Swallow heard the double detonation he shied half round, a movement which Pigott took care to complete immediately with bridle and spur, and then he dashed down the lane at full gallop.

Harry looked at his watch. "It's getting late already," he said, "and we can never be back for grandmamma's two o'clock dinner if we go to Huddlestone. I vote we go home again. We shall have news of Pigott some time this evening, or to-morrow morning."

On their return to Bilsbury, Harry told Mrs. Blount that Swallow had been rather restive, so he had lent him to Pigott, who had kindly undertaken to ride him, and would bring him back in the evening. This was certainly true, but Harry's picture of the morning's proceedings was considerably undercoloured, out of consideration for his grandmother's feelings of anxiety on his behalf. Jim, however, soon knew the full truth in the stable-yard, and when Mr. Pigott returned, at eleven o'clock at night, he heard another very long recital in the Yorkshire dialect, of which we will only give an abridgement in English.

It had taken Mr. Pigott eight hours of the hardest work he had ever gone through in a saddle to get Swallow as far as Huddlestone, but he had come back to Bilsbury in forty minutes. The stoppages occurred from time to

time exactly in the manner we have already described, and Swallow would not advance an inch on the road itself, nor could he be compelled to do so. The only way in which Pigott had been able to get finally to Huddlestone was by taking the animal across country, yielding to his caprices, but artfully inducing him to make circuits that finally led to the village which was the goal of this novel steeple-chase. He praised Swallow's powers of leaping most enthusiastically, yet, notwithstanding this ready recognition of one of his merits, declared on oath that he would never mount that brute again as long as he lived, and earnestly recommended Harry to take him into the middle of a field the next morning and shoot him. Our hero went to bed with the sense of much vexation and disappointment, but had not the slightest intention of doing what Farmer Pigott recommended.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### SHOOTING ON A SMALL SCALE.

THE day after that adventure with Swallow, Harry felt too much disgusted with equestrian amusements to resume them immediately, so he proposed a pedestrian one to Greenfield. "Let's go and shoot something!" he said.

The reader who remembers how young Harry was at the present period of our narrative will not be surprised to hear that he was not yet a recognized sportsman, and that his grandmother did not yet take out a licence for him. But this did not prevent Harry from entering upon what may be called the noviciate of a sporting career. There were plenty of guns at Bilsbury Grange, in fact, a perfect arsenal of them, though none were of the most recent fashion, and Harry had already got into the habit of walking about the home farm with a double-barrel for a companion, not to mention his dog Minimus, who was always in a high state of excitement on these excursions. He began, as all boys do, by shooting small birds, an amusement just as cruel as shooting big ones, and just as manly, since neither big nor little birds can offer any resistance.

The reader will do me the justice to admit that I am not much in the habit of suspending my narrative in order to deliver tiresome lectures on subjects that happen to

come in my way, but I take the liberty here to occupy a paragraph, and perhaps a page, with some opinions of my own.

It is the nature of boys in general to be very indifferent to the sufferings of animals, and men are just as indifferent until they are civilized by a higher culture than most of them have either the time or the inclination to acquire, and sometimes even a very high culture indeed is compatible with this indifference in its most absolute form, as we see in men of science, who dissect animals whilst they are alive, and so inflict upon them tortures more horrible than anybody can possibly imagine.\* The indifference that boys feel about animal suffering is of another kind, and not so blameworthy; but I would just beg any boys who may read this book to consider and attend to one or two things. If you shoot at all, make up your mind to become a thoroughly good shot, and exercise yourself a great deal at first upon inanimate objects, first at stationary things, and afterwards at things in motion. It is easy enough to contrive both kinds of target. Anything will do for a stationary target; the best thing is a piece of cardboard, four or five inches square, to be fastened with a nail to anything you like; a bit of paper may be pasted over it after each shot. But the moving target is a great deal more amusing, as well as affording more advanced

\* This is doing evil that good may come. Much good has come from vivisection, no doubt, and the motive of men of science is generally an honourable motive, but vivisection is not morally more defensible on that account. A French savant lately put his own dog to death by the slowest and most horrible tortures he could devise, in order to ascertain how long the animal's instinct of affection to its master could resist his cruelty, and how long its demonstrations would continue. So much for the scientific spirit without pity.

practice. There are several different ways of inventing a moving target. If you live anywhere near a pond, make a little rough boat of a solid block of light wood, so that it cannot sink, with an iron mast, and a paper sail that you can easily replace with a fresh one. Fire at this when it is sailing fast, and see how many pellets you can put into the sail. Or, if you have no pond, set up your target on a little rough carriage with four wheels, and get a friend to pull it pretty fast with a long string, you firing whilst it is in motion. This may be managed even when you are alone, by having a rough little railway on an inclined plane, the target carriage running down the decline when you liberate it by firing one barrel at a small iron target in connection with the bolt that is disengaged by the force of the shot, you reserving your other barrel for the target in motion as it runs rapidly down the rails. It is quite as amusing to practise in this way as it is to wound a quantity of wretched little birds; indeed it is even *more* amusing, for you and your friends can count the number of pellets you put into the target on each shot, a thing you cannot do on the body of a wounded bird that has gone away to suffer at a distance. And as for acquiring skill in shooting, there is ample proof of the great utility of target practice. Many of the finest shots amongst English riflemen formed themselves entirely upon the target; indeed, the distances they cover are almost incompatible with the killing of any game in England, except the wild cattle in Chillingham Park.

A good shot is more merciful than a bad one in his practice, whatever his private feelings may be. Simply to kill an animal by a sudden and painless attack, is not cruelty; it enters quite into the ordinary course of nature, for birds and beasts of prey are especially provided for this.

work, wherever man has not intervened by destroying them. But you will not find that animals have been provided for the purpose of wounding other animals, and making their lives miserable afterwards. Now, this wretched work of wounding is done principally by unskilful marksmen, and therefore I say a man has no right to aim at a living thing until he can handle his gun with precision enough to be sure of hitting it, and it is wrong, even for a thoroughly skilful marksman to fire at a creature when circumstances make its death uncertain and wounding probable. Nothing is more repugnant to humane feeling than to hear some pitiless sportsman boasting in such language as this, "I got just within range of the stag, but as he was near cover, I would not wait for a better opportunity, and fired. The ball broke his leg, but he got away on the three others, and, as it was getting late, we came back without him. However, I mean to look him up to-morrow." You will often hear talk of this kind in the Highland season from men who eat their dinners with a capital appetite, and sleep very soundly afterwards; meanwhile, the miserable animal drags its broken leg after it into the copsewood, and suffers the slow torture of a long and lingering death. The stories of sporting travels in the interior of Africa are full of such miserable incidents. The game is often so large that it is next to impossible to kill with the balls that are used, and the sportsmen amuse themselves with wounding, an amusement that is a disgrace to the English name. I wish that some inevitable law of nature existed by which the sportsman himself should suffer, let us say, a sleepless night accompanied with toothache, for every animal he wounded.

Here ends my sermon. Harry and Greenfield minor

might have listened to it with some impatience when they set forth on their shooting expedition ; but Harry had a little project more in harmony with these opinions than will at first sight appear. He invited Greenfield to accompany him to a certain pond in the woods, where wild duck were to be expected, and as they approached to the edge of this with the very utmost caution, Harry made a sign to Greenfield to come forward. A wild duck was floating motionless upon the water, it was rather a long shot, but Greenfield determined to attempt it, being encouraged thereto by Harry. Bang ! went Greenfield's gun, and all the woods echoed again.

Nothing could exceed the coolness of that wild duck. He did not even condescend to acknowledge the presence of his enemy's artillery. There he sat still on the calm water, only rocking a little when the ripple caused by the shot's disturbance reached him.

"Give him the other barrel," whispered Harry.

Greenfield did not wait more than a second or two before he delivered the other barrel. Again the woods resounded, and this time the shots plashed in the water close to the bird, sending a shower of spray all over him. Indeed, the bird himself must have received some portion of the discharge. But wounded or not, he maintained the same astonishing tranquillity of demeanour, only turning himself on the water as if to look where the shot came from.

"Well, that is a wonderful bird !" whispered Greenfield. "Shoot him yourself, Harry ; for it seems I cannot touch him."

But Harry most politely handed his own gun to Greenfield.

"Try him again, my dear fellow. Don't you see you



touched him last time, and now you are sure to have him !”

Greenfield, being now in a state of considerable excitement, took Harry's gun with such eagerness that he did not even find time to thank him, and blazed away with both barrels like a man of war saluting. The duck, on his part, showed exactly the same tranquillity that a foreign potentate displays when English tars fire the big artillery in his honour. He seemed to bob his head a little, but that may have been nothing but the effect of the ripple.

Harry now said to his companion, “There is really only one way to disturb him. You go to the other side of the pond, Greenfield, and take the punt that you will find there, and just row it as near the duck as he will let you. Then he will fly over my head, and I will bring him down as he passes.”

Greenfield accordingly took the punt, which was provided with a pair of short sculls, and pulled in the direction of the wild duck. As the pond was of moderate size, a few strokes brought him up with it. He turned his head round to have a look at the wild duck as it flew, but it did not fly, and it did not dive either. The punt was now alongside of the bird, which turned out to be a very cleverly-made decoy duck, prettily painted. Greenfield perceived this quite suddenly, and just at the same time he heard a merry laugh from the shore. There were plenty of shot-marks on the bird, so Greenfield consoled himself as he best could with the reflection that he had aimed accurately, though he had not displayed much intelligence in distinguishing between reality and imitation. However, older folks than Greenfield minor are often equally taken in by false appearances.

After a rather long walk without any other incident

than the killing of two blackbirds by Harry, they came to another pond, but not quite together, for Greenfield was a little distance in advance. No sooner had he reached the pond than he fired both barrels.

"Ah ! this time I think you won't say that I have fired at a decoy duck !" he remarked, in a tone of triumph.

"Certainly not," answered Harry, "but you have killed a brace of tame ones that belong to Farmer Pigott. However, I dare say he won't make much of a row about it, if he gets a fair compensation. We can take them home with us, and cook will make a dinner of them."

This proposition did not exactly suit Greenfield, who at once perceived that he would become an object of ridicule to everybody at Billsbury Grange. On the other hand, Harry evidently took a malicious pleasure in making Greenfield uncomfortable.

"At any rate, we must go to Farmer Pigott at once," he said, "and tell him what we have done."

"It isn't 'we,' it's I," said Greenfield minor.

They got to Pigott's farm in a quarter of an hour, and Greenfield made his confession to Pigott himself, who first opened his eyes very wide indeed, and said nothing, but when Greenfield offered to pay for the ducks, the taciturn farmer broke silence.

"Nay, nay, just you keep yer brass, I'st take nout for them ducks ; but Mistress Blount 'as allus bin a vary good lady for us, so I'll send 'em to her by our little lad. Th' ducks is fat enough, and they'll mak' a rare good dinner. But where done yau come fro', young gentleman, as you cannot tell wild ducks fro' tame uns ?"

"Bradford," answered Greenfield, as laconically as possible.

Now, Farmer Pigott, like many people who have always

lived in the country, had an intense contempt for all townsmen whatever, and the bigger the town was, the more he despised every one of its inhabitants.

"I thout as mich," he observed, looking at Greenfield with an air of gravity mingled with pity; "I thout as mich. I dunnut reckon out o' Bradford chaps."\*

\* "Out" here means *anything*.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE BILSBURY HUNT.

THERE was a pack of foxhounds in that part of Yorkshire which took its name from Bilsbury, and this hunt often met at different places within a reasonable distance of the village. The winter before he went to Dr. Templeman's Harry had gone out with the hounds several times mounted on his pony Billy, which galloped about the lanes at a rattling pace and would even go across country in a very respectable fashion, on condition only of keeping behind some heavy lumbering farmer's horse that could be relied upon to make comfortable gaps for him. In this manner, and with the kind advice and teaching of one or two experienced fox-hunters who had known Harry's father and were glad to see the son in a field where the father had distinguished himself, Harry had overcome the first difficulties of a novice, and felt himself capable of riding to hounds in a more manly fashion if only he were better mounted. For many months all his hopes had been built upon Swallow. If only Swallow turned out well Harry felt sure of emerging from the rank of children on pony-back (so admirably represented in John Leech's celebrated caricature, which Harry did not quite like) and entering the far higher category of young gentlemen elegantly

mounted, the light cavalry of fox-hunting. He had talked a great deal with Greenfield and other schoolfellows about what he had already done with Billy and about the greater achievements to be expected from Swallow, and he had looked forward to two or three great days with the Bilsbury hounds, when he was to shine on his new colt, and Greenfield was to admire him from a less exalted seat on Billy. All these hopes were now of doubtful realization. In three days the hounds were to meet at Bilsbury itself, and it was galling in the extreme to Harry to think of letting Swallow stand idle in the stable, whilst his owner, if he appeared in the field at all, must either be mounted on the now despised and humble pony of his childhood, or else on some borrowed animal, an arrangement equally wounding to his dignity. Besides, some arrangement must be made for Greenfield, for though perhaps Greenfield did not much care about hunting at all, still he was necessary as a spectator of Harry's prowess as a horseman.

Harry lay awake at night, thinking as earnestly about these things as a general thinks about a coming day of battle, and though such a comparison may seem very ambitious, still we must remember that a certain possible decision would involve considerable peril. And it was just this decision which Harry came to at last. He made up his mind that, come what might of it, he would make his appearance on Swallow, and attempt to follow the hunt like a man.

"There's going to be a meet at Bilsbury on Thursday do you know, sir?" said Jim the groom on the following morning, "I see'd it in the Brambleby paper. Do you mean to join it, sir?"

"Yes, to be sure I do."

"I hope, sir, you aren't goin' to try to ride Swallow that day, sir?"

"Yes, but I am."

Jim knew it was of very little use to attempt anything like dissuasion, so he said not a word, but he privately took certain resolutions. In the first place he determined to starve Swallow from that moment, by entirely cutting off the supply of corn, and reducing the hay to the minimum necessary to sustain life. He also determined to ride Swallow himself every morning, and prevent Harry, if possible, from mounting him in the interval. It was not very difficult to manage this, as Harry had not yet quite overcome his disgust at the last ride, which *was to have been* to Huddlestone, and, besides, he wanted to go out shooting every day with Greenfield. There was a rabbit warren on the Grange estates, and the two friends declared war on the peaceful but not quite innocent inhabitants of this, which had multiplied prodigiously of late and would soon eat up the whole neighbourhood unless pitilessly thinned. Greenfield, just at first, had some apprehensions lest the rabbits were decoy rabbits as the first wild-duck had been, but as soon as he saw them pricking their ears and washing their faces and then lying down squat with their ears flat along the back when they heard a noise, or else scuttering away to their holes if they were near enough, he had no longer any doubt upon this subject, and did execution amongst them with considerable success. The consequence of these doings was that not only Bilsbury Grange but most of the neighbouring houses were almost as full of dead rabbits as the warren had previously been of living ones, whilst

Rabbits hot and rabbits cold,  
Rabbits young and rabbits old,  
Rabbits tender, rabbits tough

abounded on the tables till all who could afford any other kind of animal food declared in the words of this rhyming grace that they had "had enough."

At length came the day of the meet, and Harry and Greenfield dressed very neatly for the occasion, and Billy and Swallow were groomed with extra care, and when the two friends mounted, which they did immediately after breakfast, they would have looked very well together if the animals had been more nearly of a size. Harry wondered very much how Swallow was going to behave, but it would be unjust to him to say that he felt any alarm upon the subject, only he wished to escape the absurd position of a man stuck fast in the middle of a run by the unconquerable stupidity of his horse. One thing rather encouraged him, Swallow started well from the Grange, and went properly enough to the place of meeting, which was not just in the village, but on a piece of open common about three-quarters of a mile northwards of Bilsbury. The morning was fresh and pleasant, but not frosty, with

"A southerly wind and a cloudy sky,"

such as fox-hunters like better than the prettiest effects of frosty sunshine:

"Swallow seems to be doing pretty well to-day," observed Greenfield.

"Well, so far he does, but however he behaves I mean to go through with it," Harry replied, rather grimly. "I'm determined that this day shall settle his business one way or another. Either he shall behave properly or else I'll get rid of him, somehow. I'm thinking seriously of shooting him."

"That would be a great pity."

"They say horseflesh is as good as beef, we might eat

part of him at the Grange and salt the rest, though I don't suppose the servants would touch it."

Harry must have been in rather a bitter state of mind to make such an observation as this. What very different sentiments from those of the Arab we have all heard about, who preferred his mare to a fortune, and smiled scornfully as he rode away from the European with his money-bags!

However Swallow went quite creditably to the meet, and Harry felt rather proud of himself on Bilsbury common where few of the younger riders were as well mounted, so far as appearances are concerned, as himself. It was rather a full meet. There were about seventy gentlemen in scarlet (the slang of hunting calls it "pink," but it is no more pink than is the red of a geranium), and also some wealthy farmers in green, quite as well mounted as the gentlemen. In the latter class were five or six men who hunted quite as a matter of business, for they bred horses on purpose for the chase, and hunted to exhibit them and find purchasers. As may be supposed, these men were particularly skilful and daring riders, indeed such riding had been their greatest pleasure from infancy, and a subject of as much rivalry and pride as seamanship is amongst the members of a yacht club. They were a good deal observed by the gentlemen, especially by those who were looking out for additions to their stables, but more observed than talked to.

Whilst Harry and Greenfield were looking about them and watching this pretty and animated sight Greenfield suddenly exclaimed, "Why, there's Wade!" and at the same instant a good-looking farmer in green, mounted on a very strong and very ugly brown horse, exchanged a word



or two with Wade, and then immediately rode up to where Harry and Greenfield were.

"Mr. Blount," said the farmer in green, "I beg leave to introduce myself to you, because I've something to thank you for. My name is Wade, James Wade, and my son is a school-fellow of yours, and you fished him out of the water. I never knew how near he'd been to drowning till just a bit since when a Brambleby friend of mine told me just exactly what had happened, for that lad o' mine never talked about it at all. They tell me it was all in the *Brambleby Courier*, but we don't take in that paper. Now I need hardly say that if ever so long as I live, it should be in my power to be of use to you, Mr. Blount, I'm altogether at your service. I cannot tell how I may be of any use to you, but something may turn up, circumstances may happen, which may give a value and a use to something that I may be able to do for you, and then I hope you'll just let me know. If it was anything about the management of land, or horses and cattle, I could let you have the benefit of a good bit of experience, and perhaps save you from losing money. But what's my lad doing over there? why doesn't he come and join his school-fellows, I wonder?"

Lobster was sitting in his saddle, not speaking to anybody, and simply occupied in examining the horses as they grouped themselves on the green. His father beckoned to him energetically, but he took no notice. At last the father rode off and brought his son back with him to Harry Blount.

There had always been a coolness between the two which the incident in the river had not removed. Harry had never felt much inclined to make a companion of a youth who had been capable of downright robbery, and

Lobster on his part felt that his obligation to Harry was too heavy to be agreeable. However, to please his father, he shook hands with Harry, and they began to talk about the weather first, and then about horses. Lobster was uncommonly well-mounted, on a chestnut mare rising five, about the size of Swallow, but more mature and better proportioned.

Harry perceived the difference at a glance, and felt the nearest approach to envy that his nature was capable of, that is to say he thought he would like to be as well-mounted as Lobster, but this may have been a consequence merely of Swallow's unsatisfactoriness. Horses are like other servants, we easily reconcile ourselves to some inferiority of appearance if they do their service well. There was Mr. Wade's horse, certainly the ugliest brute in the field (he always *was* the ugliest everywhere), yet his master regarded him with love and pride, and had excellent reasons for doing so.

Harry was too proud to say anything of Swallow's defects of temper when Mr. Wade complimented him, in his rough way, on the creature's appearance, and they had not much time for conversation of any kind, as the hunt began to move off in the direction of a certain wood where they expected to find that small, but necessary ingredient in fox-hunting—a fox. On the way Harry was recognized and spoken to by several of the neighbouring squires, some of whom complimented him on his horse; but one of them, who prided himself on a bluff sort of frankness that was often rather disagreeable, burst out laughing at Harry in the most openly sarcastic manner and said, "Why, what have we got here? Young Harry Blount seems to have put on the *toga virilis*, or rather he has hoisted himself upon the *equus virilis*, leaving the *equulus puerilis* to his friend

there. Is that the beast, may I ask, that my tenant Pigott rode the other day to Huddlestone, and had such a tussle with? He said it belonged to young Mr. Blount of the Grange, who couldn't ride it, but you seem to be riding this beast pretty fairly hitherto."

Harry did not quite like this style of speech, but what can a boy answer to a quizzical old squire?

"It's the same animal, Mr. Healaugh," he said rather coldly; "but I hope to be able to manage him."

"Well, take care of yourself, that's all, for your old grandmother's sake. I'll warrant it, she isn't quite easy in her mind about you, and she's right too. If you were a lad o' mine, I should like well enough to see you coming to the meet like a young squire, but I can't say that's exactly the horse I should have chosen for you. Anybody can see what his temper is, and besides I don't suppose he has had any training to speak of. Now what you want is an animal something like young Wade's there, gentle-tempered and properly educated. He has nothing to do but just sit quiet, like a monkey sticking to a saddle, and let her have her own way, she takes everything so neatly. I saw her work beautifully the other day at a place not far from where his father lives."

Mr. Healaugh's loquacity might have carried him much farther, for when he talked of horses he was like a perennial fountain, but just at this moment they approached the cover by a little lane and the hounds burst through a hedge at the corner, cocking their tails up again on the other side and trotting along in apparent disorder, keeping well together, however. The huntsman and his whips were riding along with them, and made a very fresh and pretty sight, both their horses and themselves being at this early stage of the proceedings, so spotlessly clean and neat.

Shortly afterwards they were lost to sight in the wood, and several gentlemen in the lane leaped the hedge at a turning, and rode out into the field till they skirted the wood, where they expected the fox to break away.

"I think they're mostly wrong, those fellows, I fancy somehow that the fox is more likely to come out on the other side," said Squire Healaugh, "and besides, they're to win'ard of the hounds, and consequently not so likely to hear 'em, for the cover is very large. You come along with me, young gentlemen, and I think I can promise you sport if they find anything."

Mr. Healaugh rode quietly round through a half-open gate to the other side of the wood, and then, still in a very leisurely manner, skirted it for half a mile. The music of the dogs was audible in the depths of the plantation, and they came out finally very near to where our little group had posted itself. "They've found nothing yet," said Mr. Healaugh; and then added, "not so sure of that, though!"

Just at the minute the leading hound dropped his tail to a horizontal line and went along a scent with a quiet business-like manner, entering the wood again. Mr. Healaugh watched where he sat in his saddle, only advancing a few paces. Suddenly a reddish brownish animal whisked itself out of the wood, went helter-skelter along the edge of it and disappeared in the wood again, the whole evolution not taking up more than twenty seconds.

"Tally-ho—back!" shouted Squire Healaugh with a voice that made the woods ring. Then he added to Harry, "I hope he isn't lost, and I don't suppose he is either. That's an old dog-fox, and he'll give us a regular stretcher, depend on it." Then he added: "Stop quietly where you are, boys, just for the present; I rather fancy he'll be for

crossing over Huddleston way, and if so we shall just get a nice start."

They had not been waiting more than five minutes when the same fox burst out of the wood once more about a hundred yards from Harry and his friends, and crossing the open field diagonally down a considerable slope was soon cutting away as fast as his legs could carry him on the level ground beyond.

Squire Healaugh said nothing, and did nothing, till the fox had a clean field's breadth in his favour and then he shouted loud enough to crack one's tympanum "Tally-ho, away!"

By this time the dogs were all out of the wood and streaming along in the same direction like a sudden impetuous flood, making a noise so merry that it is no wonder fox-hunters call it music, although it is a concert without either unison or harmony. The squire began to ride, trotting quickly down the slope which he took diagonally as the fox had done, then getting his horse on a level he urged him to a brisk gallop at a tall thorn hedge which the fine strong animal cleared in a style of great ease notwithstanding the heavy weight of his rider. Harry followed closely upon Swallow, and Swallow, seeing this excellent example before him, took the leap as lightly as a roe-buck might have done, and in an instant more was galloping side by side with Mr. Healaugh's sinewy hunter. It was the highest jump that Harry had ever attempted, but as Swallow seemed willing, so was he, and besides there was rankling in Harry's breast a wound inflicted by Mr. Healaugh, who in our hero's opinion had treated him too much like a juvenile. "I'm not in petticoats," he thought, "and I'll let the old squire see that one doesn't need to be sixty years old to ride something better than a little pony."

Meanwhile Greenfield was left to get round through a gate, as although we are all aware that a cow jumped over the moon, it was plain that Billy could never get over that hedge, which was a Great Wall of China to him.

The Squire was by this time much too hotly engaged in his favourite pursuit to take any notice of Harry, or anybody else. They were both careering fast over a flat meadow, happily not marshy, and as good ground for a gallop as you could wish to see. Harry's blood "ran lightning," at this glorious excitement. The rest of the chase were far behind, only the huntsman and whippers-in were a little in advance.

Just through the middle of this field ran a limpid brook, now filled to the edge with water, but from the level nature of the ground not very visible at a distance, except as a little silvery gleam in the meadow. The Squire knew this brook, of course, as he knew everything else in the neighbourhood, and made for a place that was not the narrowest, but the ground was firmest there. Then he just cast a glance over his shoulder to see who was following, and, to his astonishment, beheld our friend Harry coming along like the wind. Mr. Healaugh drew rein an instant, and shouted, "Go it, Harry!" to encourage him. Swallow came to the brook, but not being accustomed to leaping for width, sprang into the air, as if she had meant to clear a church-steeple. However, Swallow landed safely on the other side, and the only inconvenience to Harry was that one of his feet got out of the stirrup, and he was rather shaken in the saddle, but he soon recovered, and rode close to Squire Healaugh's side.

"Well done, young 'un!" said the Squire, heartily. "I wish thy poor father could see thee, that I do. Now,

just come along wi' me, and we'll see that fox killed, both on us, we will !"

There were several very stiff leaps in the direction the Squire had been taking when he thought only of himself, but now that he perceived that Harry was following closely, and had encouraged him to do so, he reflected that it would be as well not to lead the young gentleman positively to break his neck, as that might not quite please his grandmother. So he quietly sacrificed some of his own inclinations (a great sacrifice for a sportsman at such a moment), and led Harry a little round, which, whilst still offering plenty of hard work, and a fair proportion of that indispensable *sauce piquante*, danger, was nevertheless just practicable for a young though fearless rider. By taking this round they lost the advantage which they had hitherto possessed over the rest of the hunt, and forty or fifty gentlemen were soon almost abreast of them, going where Squire Healaugh had intended to go, to his inward vexation and annoyance. However, he and Harry went at such a speed that their little round did not lose them very much, and, after a while, they rejoined the other riders, and the whole of what was best in the field swept together like a gust of wind at no great distance from the hounds, clearing a succession of moderate fences with a regularity that resembled a charge of cavalry.

Harry had sometimes followed the hunt as he best could on his little pony Billy, but had never yet enjoyed the sensation, the finest which that fine sport affords, of forming part of the best cavalry in the field, when it streams along at the most exciting period of the chase, and the courage of every man, and of every horse, is doubled or tripled by the pervading ardour that makes all their pulses bound. Just at this moment, when Harry felt sure of his

horse and of himself, sure of arriving with the best and holding his own till the end, Swallow stopped short with a suddenness that very nearly threw Harry over his head, and launched out vigorous kicks to right and left from which his neighbours escaped by sheer good luck. It was utterly impossible to move the creature now, though Harry, in anger and vexation, spared neither whip nor spur. It is unnecessary to describe Swallow's conduct on the present occasion, as we may refer the reader to his behaviour on a previous one. He reared and kicked alternately like a violently excited rocking-horse, but not one inch did he advance. The gallant hunt swept by, each man thinking only of himself. Lobster flew past on his chestnut, and Lobster's father on his big ugly brute that served him so well, and Harry would have been left behind by every one, had not Squire Healaugh happened to look back just at that moment to see how his young friend was coming on. A single glance explained to him the nature of the combat that had now begun; and he saw clearly that Harry would stay where he was for hours. Pulling up his own horse, therefore, the Squire rode back to Harry, and addressed him in these words, whilst he himself leaped from the saddle.

"Thee get off, lad, and look sharp! that brute's good for nout.\* Jump on Grasshopper, stick thy feet i' the leathers, never heed th' stirrups—there's no need to use them spurs—there, that's it! Now, just let Grasshopper do what he likes—give him his head, let him choose his own leaps—he knows the country better than you do, and now fly away!"

Harry had obeyed these injunctions as fast as they were

\* "Nout" means nothing in Yorkshire.



uttered, but had no time to reflect upon the excessive generosity of the worthy Squire, who was now renouncing the honour dearest to him in life, that of being up to the hounds at the last. Grasshopper was a gigantic horse, of immense power, courage, and energy, but without the slightest trace of vice. Squire Healaugh had ridden him for seven winters, and given him the best of all possible trainings, so the noble animal was thoroughly up to his work, even with so heavy a weight as his master. Now, when he felt Harry on his back, immediately after having carried the Squire, the effect on Grasshopper's mind and feelings was very much as if a balloon had been tied to his saddle. Harry seemed less than nothing to Grasshopper, who immediately set off with him at a rate that at first just a little disconcerted the youthful equestrian. Never in his life had he felt beneath him such tremendous action as that, and he needed a few minutes to acquire some degree of steadiness. Very soon, however, he perceived that, when once the rider got accustomed to those giant strides, Grasshopper was exceedingly easy to ride. He cleared a high fence with a bound that seemed little more than a slight exaggeration of the other bounds which constituted his galloping, and the first experiment of this kind set Harry's mind completely at ease. He carefully observed Squire Healaugh's recommendations, and let Grasshopper take his own way, never checking him at his fences, and, in a word, behaving rather like a fly on the saddle than a rider responsible for his own safety and that of the quadruped beneath him.

Perhaps Harry scarcely *could* have stopped or directed Grasshopper if he had tried just then, perhaps Grasshopper was, in point of fact, running away with him! However

this may be, the pace was tremendous, and Grasshopper soon recovered the distance lost by his change of riders. Harry shortly found himself riding neck and neck with Lobster on one side of him and Lobster's father on the other, and a little in advance of the main body of the best horsemen in the hunt. The fox was leading away into a very difficult bit of country, that thinned the following very considerably, but the two Wades still kept steadily on. At length, Mr. Wade pulled up, and said—

“It's madness to go on in this line. We must go round by Barwick, the fox will be killed near there; that's Barwick steeple over the trees.”

Lobster pulled up also, and went with his father at a much more moderate pace than that which they had hitherto maintained. But when Harry attempted to rein in Grasshopper, he found he might just as well attempt to stop the motion of the earth. On the contrary, the very attempt to restrain him only excited him the more, and then, remembering Mr. Healaugh's injunction, Harry gave up trying, and let Grasshopper have his way, resolving only to keep his seat if possible.

The powerful horse, still quite free from anything approaching to exhaustion, held on at a terrible pace, and was now directing himself towards what was well known to be the most dangerous leap in the whole neighbourhood. A brook flowed through the midst of the flat plain between two rises of the land. This brook would have been nothing in itself, but certain circumstances made it peculiarly dangerous. It happened to be the boundary line between two different estates, and the owner of the property on the opposite side from that on which Harry would have to take the leap, finding that the brook was not in

itself sufficient to prevent the incursions of his neighbour's cattle, had put up a wooden fence on his own side, consisting of posts and railings. This fence was double, and between the two a young hedge was growing up, and had already attained a certain visible elevation. But this was not all. The same owner had been a good deal inconvenienced by the overflowing of the brook, so he had made an embankment on his own side, sloping down into his meadow, and this embankment protected it as the Dutch low grounds are protected against the sea. The reader will therefore easily understand that such a leap was usually avoided by the members of the hunt, who were wise enough to dislike the idea of breaking their necks.

Harry, as we have said, was now nothing more than a passenger on board Grasshopper, and the true captain of the ship was situated inside Grasshopper's own head. The animal heard the hounds on the other side the brook, where now the fox was labouring painfully, running his last mile. Squire Healaugh's horse, with such a feather-weight on his back (as the horse thought, by contrast, though, in truth, Harry was a strong lad of his age), was of opinion that he could jump over anything whatever, so, to the horror of a few gentlemen, who saw him, he made straight for the brook, with the speed and resolution of the winner in a steeple-chase. Harry, very wisely and properly under the circumstances, instead of checking him from timidity, when he could not possibly stop him, animated him with voice and rein, settled himself very firmly in his seat, and prepared for the great spring. When Grasshopper got to the brook, he neither leapt too soon, nor swerved to one side or the other, but gave a tremendous bound, such as Harry had never felt in the course of his limited experience. All our hero knew of this leap was

that bound, and a crash, a flying about of splinters, a sudden sinking through the air, as when a ship drops down in the trough of the sea, and then—and then what?

Nothing worse than this, that he was galloping in a green field, with both feet out of the stirrups, or rather stirrup-leathers, and his left hand clinging to the pommel of the saddle, from which unhorseman-like position he very quickly recovered. Grasshopper had got well over, just catching the upper rail of the second fence with his hoofs, and luckily shattering it at once, after which he had landed nicely on the soft meadow. A minute afterwards, Grasshopper was standing close to the hounds, when the poor fox doubled just at last against his multitude of enemies, and life was soon squeezed and shaken out of his wearied body. Not a horseman was there at that instant except our hero, but a whipper-in now galloped up at full speed, flung himself from his horse, and was soon in the middle of the raging pack, lashing to right and left, and just in time to recover the body of the fox before it was torn to pieces. Then came the huntsman and some of the most energetic members of the hunt, all very well mounted, and not quite satisfied in their own minds to see our hero already sitting there coolly in his saddle.

"Who gets the brush?" asked one of them.

"There's no doubt about that, sir," said the whipper-in. "It's this young gentleman on Mr. Healaugh's horse, young Mr. Blount, I think; he was the first of us all." And he handed the brush to Harry very respectfully.

Harry on this became the centre of general observation. "How does it happen that boy's on Healaugh's horse?" asked one gentleman, loud enough for Harry to overhear.

"Because Mr. Healaugh lent him to me, and took mine," Harry answered, rather indignantly.

"He couldn't ride his own horse," said another, also very audibly.

"Come, gentlemen," said Lord Bellingham, the master, "it is plain enough that the young gentleman can ride, or Healaugh wouldn't have lent him such a good horse as Grasshopper, which is a great favourite of his; besides, the best evidence of his riding is that he is here."

"Healaugh's horse ran away with him," grumbled one of the local squires.

"Mr. Healaugh told me to let Grasshopper choose his own course," Harry answered, "and I did so."

"It is wonderful how you came over that fence and brook," Lord Bellingham went on to say. "It is one of the most dangerous leaps in the country, and very few men have ever attempted it."

"The horse may have done it before," Harry said; "he went at it as if he knew the place."

"And you did very wisely not to check him," said the master. "Are you not the son of Mr. Blount, of Bilsbury Grange, who was so unfortunately lost at sea many years ago? Yes? Ah, I knew your father. He was one of the coolest and most courageous riders in this neighbourhood, and he would have been glad to see you to-day. But what has become of Mr. Healaugh, I wonder?"

Harry thought it very probable, but did not choose to say so, that the good squire was still sticking in the same field with that agreeable animal Swallow. He therefore quitted the group of huntsmen, amongst whom he had been temporarily an object of attention, and directed Grasshopper's steps towards the place where he had first mounted him, not, however, without carefully avoiding

the leaps that he had gone over so cleverly in the excitement of the previous chase. Harry was not the first sportsman to discover that to perform a leap in the full excitement of hunting, and to repeat the performance in cold blood are two entirely different things.

On his way, he met Greenfield coming along at a rapid pace on Billy, in a lane. After due explanations, and a triumphant exhibition of the unlucky fox's appendage, the two friends rode together in search of Swallow and Squire Healaugh, but how and in what plight they found him may be told in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XX.

### IN WHICH SWALLOW DISAPPEARS FROM THE SCENE.

OUR young friends found the Squire at no great distance from the place where Harry left him, still sitting on Swallow, but making no attempt whatever to urge the animal in any direction. He was tranquilly smoking a cigar, and surveying the landscape, which, it must be confessed, was neither beautiful nor interesting from the particular spot where Swallow happened to be standing.

"Well, boys," said the Squire, "here I am, you see, still. This beastly brute willn't go through that gate. I've had a fight for it, of course, but it's no good. I might kill him, or he might kill me, or I might cheat him by going a roundabout, but he willn't go through that gate, and I can't make him. Sometimes you may tire out a beast like this by patience, and I'm just trying that dodge now; but the worst of it is, I'm getting so very hungry, I've touched nothing since breakfast. Have you got such a thing as a sandwich, either of you?"

Both were utterly unprovided. They had trusted to the chance of getting cheese and bread in some rustic hostelry.

"Well, it is a bad look-out. But where have you been with Grasshopper, young man? You and he seem to be

good friends, eh? Is the hunt over, d'ye think? If it isn't, what did ye come back to me for? You should have gone on, young 'un. Grasshopper would have kept up with the best of 'em."

Harry answered with great modesty of manner: "Grasshopper carried me so well, sir, that I got in just at the death, before any one else, indeed. What a capital horse he is! And they gave me the brush, sir," he added, very quietly lugging, with some difficulty, that precious trophy from his pocket.

"What, got the brush? Well, you *are* a fine lad, Blount. I knew you were a plucky one when I saw you this morning. Come and shake hands, and let me congratulate you." The Squire grasped Harry's hand with great heartiness, and continued: "Now, if you both would just come and dine with me, I should be very glad indeed to see you. I invite you without much ceremony, but you must excuse this in an old fellow like me. We'll send a servant to tell Mrs. Blount that you're both quite safe."

Harry accepted the invitation, and offered to change horses again.

"Well, as to that, I would have sat it out with this brute, but I *am* so hungry. Besides, I don't think it's much good. He'll never be fit for anything if his temper cannot be trusted."

Being now on their own horses, the Squire rode Grasshopper leisurely through the gate, and Harry followed with Swallow, who seemed to have completely got rid of his recent obstinacy, for, with Grasshopper just before him, he passed through the gate quite easily.

"I recommend you to get rid of him," the Squire continued. "I know that sort of beast well enough, for I've had several with that peculiar temper. They seem very



quiet and trustworthy, and they often go very well, but all of a sudden an ill-humour seizes them, and then you have a great fight. It's no good, you know. We are not horsebreakers by trade; and, in my opinion, the habit of rough-riding is rather prejudicial to a gentleman's seat on horseback than otherwise. I say that a gentleman and his horse should be good friends, and understand each other, and there should be neither ill-temper and disobedience in the horse, nor cruelty on the part of the rider. Grasshopper thinks so, too, and acts up to his principles."

The horse recognized his name, and pricked his ears, taking a firmer and swifter step, as if in adhesion to his master's views.

"Now there are men," the squire continued, "who take a false pride in overcoming a vicious brute whenever they happen to possess one. It's as foolish as if one were to make it a point of honour to go on wearing an ill-made shoe. As for courage, I think men who do this, exercise their courage in a wrong direction. You have courage enough, and have proved it, so take my advice, and get rid of that brute at once."

"I will do anything you recommend, sir."

"That's a good lad. Now, I'll manage matters for you nicely. I've something in view; something very suitable for you."

They rode on for about half a mile, when the Squire led them into a road. Another road came to join this, like a confluence of two rivers, and a group of horsemen were seen advancing along it at a leisurely pace.

"Now, boys, you keep straight on, and we shall join each other again in a quarter of an hour."

Saying this, Squire Healaugh put Grasshopper at the fence, which the noble animal cleared with the greatest

facility, and after leaping two substantial gates he landed in the other road. Mr. Wade and his son were riding together, a little in advance. The Squire rode up to them at once, and plunged in *medias res*, asked if Mr. Wade had noticed Harry Blount's horse, and whether he thought anything was to be made of him, then said he much desired to see Harry better mounted, and suggested that perhaps an exchange might be effected, unless that chestnut young Mr. Wade was riding was a favourite that he did not wish to part with. Lobster's father jumped at the opportunity of rendering a service to Harry. "Why, sir," he said, "as to my son's feelings about his chestnut, he's been hankering after a fine black mare that I have at home, and intended to sell. He shall have the mare, and young Blount shall have the chestnut, for nothing, if he will accept it. I've been wanting to make him a present of some sort, and he's heartily welcome to that little horse; he'll never find a better."

Squire Healaugh was much astonished at the extreme facility with which he had succeeded in a negotiation that he thought likely to be very difficult, for, as a general rule, rich Yorkshire farmers are not much disposed to give away their favourite horses. He expressed his surprise, and Mr. Wade, in a few words, told of Harry's conduct in the river. The Squire then insisted that Mr. Wade should accept Swallow in exchange, as Harry might object to receive so handsome a present. "Arrange it just as you please," Mr. Wade answered; "just as you think may be most agreeable to young Mr. Blount; he is welcome to anything I have, and to take it in his own way."

By this time the two roads met, and Harry came up with Greenfield. Five minutes afterwards, Harry found

himself mounted on the beautiful chestnut, under an impression that Swallow was rather an object of desire to the Wade family in general.

The remainder of the horse's history may be told in a few words. Lobster tried to ride him to the house (ten miles from Bilsbury) where he happened to be staying, but finding this utterly impossible, left him at an inn, with orders to forward him to his own residence behind a carrier's waggon. The waggoner's three horses very often suspected that there must be a powerful drag on the wheels, for Swallow from time to time did what he could to stop them; however, three to one is great odds, especially when each of the three is twice as strong as the resisting animal behind, so Swallow came on because he could not help himself. After being kept six weeks on trial at Mr. Wade's, during which Lobster had many adventures like those already described on the road to Huddlestone, and was thrown nine times without any serious injury to his fat person, Swallow was disposed of to a neighbouring coach proprietor for the sum of ten pounds sterling. But the drivers did not appreciate his qualities, and protested against him, so that another situation had to be sought, and at last the animal found his level, and a dead level it was, too, being the towing-path on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. It was a great transition from being the pet at Bilsbury Grange to being the slave of a rude bargee, tugging night and day at one end of a long rope, when there was a forty-five-ton canal-boat at the other; and if Swallow had been a responsible creature, one might have fastened a moral to the stern of the canal-boat. Harry never saw him again, except once, and then without recognizing him. Harry happened to be riding over a canal-bridge and Swallow had just passed

under it. The young gentleman reined his chestnut, cast a glance on the canal, and thought to himself, as he saw the boat-horse slowly advancing beneath the whip of a hard master, "What a wretched life it must be for these poor brutes!" But he little thought that the very animal he was pitying had been the pet of Bilsbury Grange.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### SQUIRE HEALAUGH AT HOME.

MR. HEALAUGH and our two young friends now trotted pleasantly in the direction of Overblow House, about six miles from the place where Harry had changed horses, and nearly the same distance from Bilsbury. Overblow was a strangely situated out-of-the-way old place, near the top of a considerable eminence, surrounded by a park that occupied all the hill, and which was encircled by many groups of ancient oak-trees of gnarled and twisted shapes, but of moderate height, as the nature of the ground did not seem favourable to any great development in vegetation. The Squire did wisely to leave his park quite in its natural idleness, for it was a delightful relief to the eye after the perfectly cultivated country in the neighbourhood. This savage character was much increased by some majestic groups of rocks, interspersed with heather, one of which was situated quite on the summit of the hill, where it presented very much the appearance of a feudal castle, whilst the mansion itself was more snugly ensconced about a hundred yards lower down. The house was a comfortable and picturesque residence of moderate size, originally built by one of the Squire's forefathers in the sixteenth century, and very little altered since. The present owner

had an intense attachment to the place, and took great pride in it. So great, indeed, was his love for Overblow, that it was difficult to persuade him to abandon it even for a few weeks. He hardly ever visited London, and though he thought it his duty to go to Scarborough every year, to give a little variety to his daughter, it was always with undiminished delight that he came back to his own hill and his own house.

He was not a very rich man, as times go. There were plenty of manufacturers in Leeds and Bradford who could have "bought him up" with the profits of one good year in their lucrative business. I doubt if his clear income, money that he could spend, ever got beyond a thousand a year, though it generally came very near it; but then he was a liberal landlord, and all his estate was kept in admirable order. Besides, he had but a small establishment, for his whole family was limited to one child, a daughter, thirteen years old, and a maiden sister, who lived with him and kept house. There were two women-servants, and a governess. There were also two or three men about the place; but these were scarcely servants for luxury and state, being, in reality, farm-servants, though one of them looked after the small garden, and another, who groomed the horses, also acted as coachman when Miss Healaugh went to Brambleby to do her shopping.

The reader is not to suppose for an instant, although the Squire's income was so moderate, that he ever felt the pinch even of that relative poverty which troubles the peace of gentlefolks. He cared nothing whatever for any costly recreation, except hunting, and was so moderate in his indulgence even of that favourite amusement, that Grasshopper sufficed for his needs. I may add that Miss Healaugh, the Squire's sister, had an independent private

income of three hundred a-year, and an independent spirit besides, so that she would not live at Overblow at all unless the Squire consented to let her pay half the expenses of the housekeeping ; and besides this, she was such a capital economist, such an excellent manager, such a vigilant, watchful, lynx-eyed lady of a house, that never a sixpence was spent in vain. Indeed, the Squire, who scarcely knew his own blessedness in possessing such a treasure, was often rather disposed to complain of Miss Healaugh's too great regard for his interest, which led her to keep a rather less liberal table than he had been accustomed to in the lifetime of his wife. Miss Healaugh had a fairly good appetite for a lady, but it was as nothing to the Squire's, especially when he came from a day's hunting with Grasshopper, and sniffed the hill air at Overblow just immediately before dinner-time ; so it is intelligible enough that he wanted more nourishment than either his sister, or the governess, or his little daughter Alice.

I may just observe, before introducing the reader to the interior of Overblow House, that, although Miss Healaugh knew Mrs. Blount perfectly well by sight, and the two ladies bowed to each other when they met, there was never any visiting between Overblow and Bilisbury Grange. This was not in the least due to any animosity between the two ladies or their families, nor to any particular pride in Miss Healaugh, but simply to circumstances, which often keep families apart for generations who are perfectly well adapted to each other by their habits and social position. Squire Healaugh had known Mr. Blount, and had begun to take some interest in Harry a year before our narrative opened, when he had met him in the hunting-field, mounted upon Billy, and jumping through gaps and across little ditches, in a highly spirited manner, that had

afforded the worthy Squire considerable amusement. His notion of inviting Harry and Greenfield to dine at Overblow that day was simply the inspiration of the moment. He had taken a liking to Harry for his horsemanship, and also because, having no sons of his own, he had a vacant place in his heart which a fine, spirited, and well-conducted boy might very readily occupy.

"Sister," he said, when they dismounted, and she came to the door to meet him, "here are two young gentlemen come to dine with us. This is Mrs. Blount's son, of Bilsbury, and this is a friend of his, Mr. Greenfield."

The lady did not seem quite pleased; however, she put on a smile for the occasion, and extended her hand to Harry. "I know your grandmamma," she said; "is she very well? Do come in. Why, what a fine young gentleman you are! I'd no notion Mrs. Blount's grandson could be so tall. You've neither brothers nor sisters, I believe. I wish I'd known they were coming, brother," she went on; "you should have let me know."

"So I would have done, if there'd been a telegraph to Overblow, but there isn't."

"Now, really, brother, what nonsense you talk. I wish you wouldn't."

"Well, then, I willn't."

Miss Healaugh disappeared from the entrance-hall, and wended her way to the kitchen, whilst the squire took his young friends into his private "study." It was a charmingly pleasant room, with a peculiar masculine sort of pleasantness from which the feminine element was completely excluded. Ladies universally believe that a room can never be habitable unless it is encumbered with crotchet-work and Berlin wool, and flowers; but this is rather a mistake. There is a masculine habitableness as



and as a feminine, and each is delightful when thorough in his own kind. The Squire's room was a man's room, beyond all doubt. It was furnished with a great deal of cumbersome and rather barbarous carved oak, in book-cases and cabinets, and it was adorned with several pictures, all in some way connected with the owner's favourite pursuit of hunting. Some of these had been painted for previous generations of Healaughs, and represented hounds that would hunt no more, and horses that would never again carry a rider, unless the legends of phantom huntsmen are true: the phantoms that pass in the night-time over hill and valley, with noisy hounds that chase in the upper air. But in the Squire's room there was also an excellent portrait of himself on Grasshopper, done by a really clever artist, who happened to be staying with Lord Bellingham. The Squire had availed himself of this opportunity to get a worthy memorial of his horse, and Miss Healaugh had entreated the artist to put the owner in the saddle, for which not unimportant addition she had paid fifty pounds out of her own independent pocket. As for the books in the book-cases, the owner had his own range in literature, out of which he did not care to wander. He had been prepared for Oxford, but never went there; he could read Latin, but not Greek, and he read French, too, with a queer pronunciation. Virgil and Pope were his two favourite poets—a choice which is enough of itself to show that there was a good deal of real refinement in his mind, although he did not always talk without provincialism. There was a wide difference between Squire Healaugh and the utterly illiterate squires of a hundred years ago.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### RIFLE PRACTICE.

MR. HEALAUGH knew very well how to entertain two young fellows like Harry and his friend. He did not read to them either Virgil or Pope, nor did he question them in a disagreeable way about their classical studies, but he showed them such a collection of guns and pistols, as they had never before had any opportunity of examining. From the most awkward of old flint guns to the most handy of modern breech-loaders, the series was complete; and you might distinctly see in this collection the history of the fowling-piece for several generations. So of the pistols, from the dragoon-pistol of Cromwell's time down to the ivory-stocked, silver-mounted waistcoat-pocket-revolver of to-day, there was not a single hiatus. Most people have a fancy of some sort, and this was the squire's; but he did not simply keep his collection to look at, he amused himself and his friends by comparing these various fire-arms in actual use. He said it did them good, and I believe he rather imagined that the old guns and pistols felt gratified by being occasionally made use of, as an old dog feels flattered when his master invites him for a walk.

"Now, boys," the squire said, "it is not dark yet, let

us go and try some of these things at a target. Here are two straps that will do for belts for you. There, that's it. Now, stick them full of pistols, any pistols that are in serviceable order. That will do—yes, take another if you like. Now, let me see which bullets you will want. I've bullets for all these things. Take a couple of guns, each of you." Mr. Healaugh himself stood armed like Robinson Crusoe. "But, before we go out, let us have sherry and biscuits. I can't stand it any longer; I've been hungry these three hours."

Just at this minute the door opened, and in bounded a little girl of twelve years old, with a great cascade of golden hair rippling all down her back, and a complexion of the clearest rose-colour, heightened and refreshed by the pure, keen winds of Overblow. She came in like some light thing that is carried on a gust of air, and settles down at your feet, and began—

"Why, you dear old papa——"

For these words were already in her head, and on her lips, but there she stopped quite suddenly, and looked in astonishment at the two young gentlemen, who stood there armed to the teeth, like brigands.

Harry made an awkward bow and blushed. Greenfield made a graceful bow, and did not blush, but only smiled slightly at the young lady's surprise and embarrassment.

As for her, there was a refuge from these two terrible strangers, and she sought it immediately, in taking her father's hand, and putting up her sweet face for a kiss. Of course, she got one, or rather she got three, and then she looked round more boldly.

"Where are you going to, papa, with all these guns and pistols?"

"Going to try them at the target till dinner is ready."

"May I go with you?"

"No, Alice. Something might burst; little girls are better out of the way of fire-arms."

"Well, but if something may burst, it is dangerous for you, too."

"Boys and girls must be differently educated. Boys must be accustomed to a great many dangerous things, but girls should avoid them."

Alice Healaugh submitted immediately. Harry and Greenfield were introduced to her, and she shook hands with the most simple frankness, and then left the room. The Squire looked after her with eyes of the tenderest love, and stood on the hearthrug for a few seconds, like one in a dream, lost to all surrounding impressions. When that little girl was in the room, he had no eye for anything else, and when she left it it was like taking away the lamp on some dark winter's evening.

Suddenly he roused himself by an effort, poured out three glasses of sherry, and began munching biscuits. "We've just an hour, enough for a little experimental practice. Come along, boys!"

They went to a large open space in the park where was a natural rockery, and in the middle of this was an iron target.

"Now, I shall do the loading, and you two shall do all the firing. You shall try all these arms in succession. Here's a nice light little rifle to begin with. See, it has a hair-trigger. It's the right thing for rook-shooting."

Greenfield took the little rifle, which was as pretty a thing as ever was invented for the extinction of animal life, and he aimed at the target with such accuracy that the first shot hit the bull's-eye. Mr. Healaugh opened his

eyes in astonishment, then he gave a hearty laugh, and laid his large hand on Greenfield's shoulder.

"That's a fluke, young gentleman, evidently."

"It's a lucky shot, sir; but I don't admit it was a fluke. It is not the first time I've hit a bull's-eye."

"Ah! he won't admit it to be a fluke—didn't expect he would. All boys are so. They're all a lot of conceited little monkeys—please excuse the expression. I was a boy myself once, and just like others, and was always telling great lies about my own exploits, which, of course, nobody believed. Now, this young gentleman will go back to Bradford, and say that he hit old Healaugh's target in the very centre at the first shot."

"And that will be quite true, sir," answered Greenfield, glad of his opportunity.

"True, and not true. Luck and you did it together. If it was skill, and not luck, you can do it again. Now, I'll tell you what I will do, young gentleman. If you can put three bullets out of six shots into that bull's eye, you shall have the rifle, if you care to accept it. The weapon seems to suit you very nicely."

Greenfield had been longing for just such a rifle as that for at least two years. There was one of exactly the same weight and calibre, and finished in the same manner, in a gunsmith's window at Bradford, not far from where Greenfield lived. Many a time had he stopped before that gunsmith's window, many a time had his eyes wandered over that exquisitely-finished little collection of fire-arms, fowling-pieces, rifles, silver-hilted pistols, reposing in luxury of green cloth or azure velvet; yet every time without exception had his gaze finally settled and rested on what appeared to him the most enviable jewel of the whole exhibition—that dainty little rifle. Greenfield never had

much pocket-money to spare, his little subscriptions at school for boating and cricket absorbed nearly the whole of it, and only left just enough for some ordinary holiday amusements, so he looked at that rifle as a poor lover of art looks at some precious picture, without the faintest expectation of ever becoming its possessor. At last it disappeared from the gunsmith's window, and not to see it any more had been a positive loss to Greenfield.

"I shall do my best, Mr. Healaugh," he answered, "I remember just such a little rifle at a gunsmith's shop in Bradford."

"Which gunsmith?"

"Tattersall."

"Very likely it's the same rifle, for I bought this at Tattersall's last year."

Greenfield, now considerably excited by the eager hope of possessing this treasure, aimed with more anxious care than the first time, but not so accurately. The ball hit the target indeed, but quite on the outer edge.

The Squire said, "I thought as much. It was mere luck. But I want you to win the little rifle, as I see you look upon it very sweetly, so instead of six shots I will say seven. Now be as cool as you can, and take your time about it. The first shot was a fluke, but the second was done in a flutter. I dare say you may have skill enough to win."

Thus encouraged, Greenfield tried again, and got nearer, yet not in the red. At the fourth shot he got his first bull's-eye. The fifth again, was a failure. The sixth was as good as the fourth.

Just then the dinner-bell rang loudly at Overblow House, and the sound came with the wind over the heathery hill, and was redoubled by the rocks.

"Never mind that jingle," said the Squire, "but wait till it's over, because it will flutter you. I wish they'd stop it."

At length the jingle ceased, and Greenfield took aim as deliberately as he possibly could. "Crack!" went the little rifle. Greenfield and Harry both ran to the target and there was a third splash of lead well within the central disc.

"Fairly won!" said the Squire, when he came up more leisurely. "The rifle is yours." Greenfield clasped his new possession with an inexpressible delight. He had hardly words to thank the generous giver. Harry looked at it too, and I dare say there may have been just a shade of envy in his face, for the Squire began to think in the privacy of his own innermost mind:

"I've got into a bit of a mess about this business. I've given one lad a rifle, or he's won it, which comes exactly to the same thing, and now the other lad's sure to be jealous. I was an old fool not to see that sooner, but then I'm not much used to lads. It'll never do for t'other to go away dissatisfied. He must have his chance too."

Then he said aloud—

"Now, Blount, here's a good Scotch deer-stalking rifle made in Glasgow, and as sure a weapon as you can find, but isn't it rather heavy for your strength?"

Harry took the weapon, brought it up to the shoulder and kept it as steady as an old deerstalker would have done. He was exceedingly strong for his age, especially in the arms and chest, and very proud of his strength. The weight of the rifle was therefore positively an additional attraction to him, and he had reason on his side, for a heavy arm ensures much greater regularity in shooting

than a light one, as it is less liable to be disturbed by slight involuntary motions of the muscles.

"I think I can use it, Mr. Healaugh."

"Very well, then you shall shoot for it exactly on the same conditions as your friend Greenfield. If you can get three bull's-eyes out of seven shots you shall have that rifle."

The prize was less for Harry than the other had been for Greenfield, because Harry was much richer. Still it was well worth trying for, and the more so that Harry's pocket-money happened to be quite exhausted. And independently of all money matters he wanted very much to do at least as well as Greenfield had been able to do.

His first three shots were wide of the mark, and one missed the target altogether. He was firing too high, the consequence of an effort in maintaining the heavy rifle. Then he tried lower and got a bull's-eye. The fifth shot was near the centre, but not in it. The sixth was a bull's-eye again. He was just preparing for the seventh, just raising the rifle to his shoulder, when a dull noise was heard to windward, a dull clattering as of a heavy animal galloping on the turf. This strange sound made Harry pause and look in the direction from whence it came. Nothing was visible at first, and the Squire, who was slightly deaf, did not catch the sound yet, and asked what was the matter.

"I hear something," said Harry, "don't you hear it, sir?"

Before the Squire could answer, an enormous bull came over the rising ground to their left, galloping at full speed, with his tail high in the air, and bellowing terribly. Seeing the little party he bore straight towards them with the rush of a charge of cavalry. Owing to the shape of the ground he had been invisible till almost upon them.



There was no cover within reach, the nearest tree was too far away for shelter, the rock against which the target stood was bare and perpendicular, and twenty feet high. They had several weapons, but none were loaded except the rifle in Harry's hand, and there was not time to load them. For a second or two they all three stood there in amazement, fixed to the spot as the horror-struck dreamer is in the midst of a nightmare, when danger comes nearer and nearer, and his limbs refuse their office. The Squire was the first to recover. He did not take Harry's rifle—there was not time—but he said in a tone of command—“Shoot him!”

Harry raised the rifle at once, aimed at the head, and fired. The bull bounded forward, but before the smoke cleared away the ponderous animal stumbled on the rough ground, and fell on his left side. One glaring eyeball looked up to the dull gray sky, white foam came out of his mouth, and the limbs were still convulsed by twitchings of involuntary motion.

“He's dead!” said the Squire, and all three went to examine him.

The strangest thing about his mighty carcass was that there was not the slightest perceptible trace of a wound upon it anywhere.

“He must have died in a fit,” said the Squire, “there is no bullet mark, and I see no blood.”

“I believe I hit him,” said Harry. “Here, Greenfield, just help me to turn his big head over,—will you? it's so heavy I cannot manage it,”—then to the Squire, “will you examine the left eye, sir, if you please?”

“He's hit him in the eye, he's hit him in the eye!”

“I think, sir,” said Harry quietly, “I may fairly claim

the rifle now, for this makes my third bull's-eye, does it not, in the seven shots?"

"Keep it and welcome, and many thanks to you. That beast ought to have been shot many a month since, but I never could make up my mind to do away with him, he was worth a good bit o'money, and I always hoped he might get tamer in course of time. He frightened folks so that nobody durst come into the park, but I didn't think so much about it as I should have done. However, there he lies, and he won't trouble poor folks any more. He was very near killing a beggar about a fortnight since, but the man climbed up a tree."

Just then the dinner-bell jingled again very loudly and almost angrily.

"We mun go back, lads, as fast as we can," said the worthy Squire with the purest Yorkshire accent, and a comical expression of alarm, "or else my sister willn't be pleased with us. She cannot abide people being late for dinner."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### SQUIRE HEALAUGH'S WOMANKIND.

EITHER Mr. Healaugh was really very much afraid of his sister or else he pretended to be. My opinion is that there was both reality and affectation in his avowal of alarm at the idea of being late for dinner. He was really a good deal in fear of his sister, but he pretended to be still more afraid than he really was, in order to conceal what he felt. As for her, she had no notion that the master of the house was to consider himself above the law. Miss Healaugh's view was that her brother ought to set the example of a perfect submission to discipline—she did so herself, and so might he—*she* was punctual (fearfully and wonderfully punctual !) and he might be punctual also, for he had a watch. His duty was to be in his bedroom and tidy himself immediately after the ringing of the first dinner-bell—to appear in the drawing-room as soon as the second bell had done jingling, and to have a fresh and tidy appearance, like an English country gentleman. The Squire had no valet, yet not a nobleman in England was better cared for as to the details of his clothing.

His sister regularly visited his dressing-room half an hour before he entered it, saw (in winter time) that the fire was lighted, and candles ready on the dressing-table, laid out

his evening-clothes and his clean shirt, a shirt on which no button was ever wanting, and took precautions about his hot water. She could not endure any carelessness or falling-off from the habits that she thought necessary to a gentleman's existence, and the very common modern practice of dining in gray clothes, appeared to her (what it really is) an abandonment of one of the best opportunities for cleanliness, and a lazy relinquishment of discipline. The phrases "no occasion to dress, you know," "don't dress," "come as you are," so often heard in modern times, were hateful to Miss Healaugh's ears, and the Squire would never have ventured to pronounce them.

The reader may now understand the position in which the Squire found himself that evening. The second bell had already rung, and before they reached the house, a *third* bell jingled so violently that the rooks were quite alarmed about it. Poor Mr. Healaugh knew perfectly well that no servant in his small establishment would ever have ventured upon such an unwonted appeal, they would as soon have rung the church bells during service. The order must have come from a *higher authority*!

"I say, boys," the Squire exclaimed, this time without the slightest affectation of anxiety, "we are all three unfit to join the ladies as we are. Of course, you have no dress things with you; but we must all do what we can, and we've precious little time to do it in, too! We must tidy ourselves to the best of our ability." He had still his red coat and top-boots on, but appeared in the drawing-room about five minutes after his arrival in the house in complete evening dress, such was the celerity he had acquired in the art of dressing by frequent practice in moments of intense anxiety and alarm whilst Miss Healaugh sat waiting below.

"It would have been more civil to the lads," he thought, as he descended the staircase, "if I had just put on a gray coat, as they've no dress things with them." But he had found his black clothes spread out as usual in his dressing-room, and knew that this was equivalent to the most direct expression of Miss Healaugh's authoritative will.

When he appeared in the drawing-room, his sister sat in state at one end of the sofa near the fire in her usual evening array. She was neat in her dress, and had much good taste. Nobody had ever seen *her* either slovenly or unpunctual. This made her all the more intolerant of other people's shortcomings.

She sat reading a book from Mudie's, and Alice sat opposite, in a state of perfect primness and tidiness, talking in an undertone to her governess. When the Squire entered, his sister appeared altogether unaware of his presence, but continued her reading, apparently quite absorbed in her subject. One glance, however, did she cast—not at the Squire, now altogether unworthy of such notice—but at the timepiece over the fire-place. She had no need to look at that timepiece for her own information, seeing that she knew the time to a second, but she was well aware that her glance would be perceived by the guilty man, and not lost upon him.

The Squire saw in a moment how matters stood. "In for it!" he said to himself. "I wonder how long it will last this time? Last time it went on for a fortnight. I hope she'll be civil to the lads." He did not speak to Miss Healaugh, not wishing to aggravate matters, and felt no disposition to eat humble pie, but he spoke to the governess.

"Well, Miss Wilkinson, have you been out to-day?"

It does not much matter what Miss Wilkinson answered, but neither question nor answer was lost upon Miss Healaugh, who paid very little attention to the book she was pretending to read. Then the boys came in. "I wonder how she'll behave now?" thought the Squire.

Miss Healaugh at once laid down her book, rose from her seat with an air of great dignity, which she well knew how to assume on due occasion, and said,

"Your dinner will not be a very good one, young gentlemen; it might have been eatable three-quarters of an hour ago. We'd better go straight to the dining-room."

With this she took possession of Harry Blount's arm, and a minute afterwards was seated at table with a solemn look, as if some very grave event had just occurred.

Harry was not much given to conversation with ladies, unless he knew them very well, so he confined his attention to his soup-plate. Greenfield was much bolder and more enterprising in society, and ventured to attempt a conversation with the severe-looking lady who presided.

"We have been shooting at a target," he said, "but Blount has been shooting at something else. He has killed Mr. Healaugh's bull."

Miss Healaugh's curiosity was too much excited by this announcement to allow her to maintain that coldness of demeanour in which she had enveloped herself. "Has he really?" she said, with animation. "Well, I'm very glad to hear it; I am, indeed. Nobody could walk in the park on account of that bull. I have often wished that my brother would sell it, or have it destroyed. Did it attack you?"

"He came straight down upon us," said Harry, "and might have done harm, as we had no tree near enough to

take refuge, so Mr. Healaugh kindly gave me permission to shoot him."

"And he did it most cleverly," said the Squire.

"I *am* so glad none of you were injured," the lady of the house went on, quite forgetting her ill-humour. "It would [have been sad news to send to your parents, if either of you young gentlemen had been hurt."

"And if the old one had been mauled," observed the Squire, "would anybody have regretted it?"

"I wish you wouldn't talk so, brother."

"Well, I can't see what there is amiss in what I've just said, sister. I'm rather stiffish in my limbs now, and cannot run so fast as a bull, so he might easily have caught me, and mauled me. He certainly intended as much when Blount stopped him."

Alice had been looking at her father until now without uttering a word; but as she realized the idea that he had been in danger, she began to feel the need of some expression of her own sentiments. But there was an embarrassment about saying anything in words before two strange young gentlemen. Meanwhile the need for an expression became urgent, and finally irresistible. So she rose from her seat.

"Sit down, Alice," said her aunt. "If you want anything the servant will give it you."

Alice said nothing to this, and did not obey, but went straight to her father, threw both arms round his neck, kissed him three or four times with great earnestness, as if each kiss were to tell him all the love that was in her heart, and then went back to her place at table, feeling relieved and happy. She did not say a word; but words were quite superfluous in this instance. The Squire knew all that the kisses meant, and each of them filled him with

the sweetest happiness that was possible at that period of his life.

"Alice! Alice!" said Miss Healaugh, disapprovingly. She had an objection to such demonstrations. Neither the Squire nor Alice said anything, but they looked at each other, not without a slightly malicious intention. Little scenes of this description were not unfrequent at Overblow. The young lady had long before made the discovery that there was something not altogether agreeable to her aunt in the strength of her daughterly affection, and I am afraid that the knowledge of this, so far from repressing her demonstrations, had rather an opposite tendency. "May not I love papa in his own house?" the girl thought to herself, "and show him that I love him?"

Harry and Greenfield were seated on each side of Miss Healaugh, but what a difference there was between the two! Harry felt awkward and embarrassed, said a word or two in answer to Miss Healaugh's questions, and then relapsed into silence, thinking of his new rifle, and wishing the next day were come that he might try it at Bilsbury. Greenfield talked with the ease and tact of a man accustomed to society, and quite won Miss Healaugh's good graces by entering into all her ideas. She mentioned Harrogate and Scarborough; he had been to both, had made all the excursions, and listened with the most lively sympathy to an account of the effects of Harrogate water on Miss Healaugh's health, mentioning an exactly similar case that had come under his own observation. Like most people of her age, Miss Healaugh had her own little bodily infirmities, although a vigorous woman yet, and before dinner was over, Greenfield knew all about them, and had been advising her just like a doctor. It was not the first time that he had heard of such things, so he



could talk as other people had talked. Then Miss Healaugh changed the conversation to that fertile theme, the churches and clergy, asking Greenfield if he had ever heard a certain clergyman who had formerly lived in the neighbourhood of Overblow, but had now a church at Bradford. Of course, Greenfield had heard him, and could tell all about him, including the number of his congregation, the increase in his family, and the amount of his present income. The consequence of this interesting conversation was that Miss Healaugh was much pleased with Greenfield, and that the temporary cloud upon her countenance was removed from it like a veil.

After dinner, the Squire gave the boys some port that would have rejoiced the heart of Lobster himself if he had been present; and when they adjourned to the drawing-room, the Squire sang a hunting-song with great spirit, accompanied by Miss Wilkinson on the piano. Strangely enough, instead of becoming more lively on hearing this music, Miss Healaugh grew positively gloomy, and looked at the fair pianist with glances that implied anything rather than unqualified approbation; but that insinuating Greenfield went up to her, and began to talk as if the music were a matter of indifference to him, on which Miss Healaugh looked quite agreeable again. The Squire knew nothing of all this, but called on the boys to join him in the chorus, which they managed with considerable effect, after attempting it several times. Here are three stanzas, which may be quite enough for the reader, though there were several others in the original composition, the work of some Yorkshire poet:—

“ In the early dawn, so cold and gray,  
The dawn of a dreary winter's day,

We mounted our horses and rode away ;  
The weather was sad, but our hearts were gay,  
For it was a hunting morning.

CHORUS.

*" The weather was sad, but our hearts were gay,  
For it was a hunting morning.*

" The sun did not rise so soon as we,  
Yet yellow and pale at last rose he,  
Chilled with his bath in the eastern sea,  
But, warmed with a canter by lane and lea,  
We rode to the meet in the morning.

CHORUS.

*" But, warmed with a canter by lane and lea,  
We rode to the meet in the morning.*

" Five-score horsemen, staunch and good,  
Met on the edge of Bilsbury Wood,  
All on hunters of Yorkshire blood,  
Ready to go through field or flood,  
And fresh for a start in the morning.

CHORUS.

*" Ready to go through field or flood,  
And fresh for a start in the morning."*

Mr. Healaugh sang this with remarkable animation, especially when he came to the chorus. He had a fine manly voice, and rather enjoyed the exercise of it, so that Miss Wilkinson often accompanied him. On these occasions, the worthy gentleman (owing to the position of the piano) always had his back to Miss Healaugh, so that he did not perceive the shades of displeasure on her countenance. What was she thinking, I wonder? She was thinking something of this kind, " That disagreeable Miss Wilkinson ! I'll get her out of Overblow before many months are over."

Meanwhile, Alice sat wondering and imagining about the two young strangers who had made such a sudden and unexpected appearance on the lonely height of Over-

blow. Like all young ladies who live in great retirement, she knew very little indeed of any world but the little world around her, and her imagination was proportionately active in trying to make up for the deficiency of a real experience. Greenfield's ease of manner rather frightened her; she felt that he had seen much more than she had seen, and was far her superior in knowledge of the world; but she felt attracted by Harry's comparative timidity and awkwardness. This evening was quite a strange and important event for Alice, and she inwardly speculated about the two visitors long after they had taken their leave.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A FIRST LESSON IN NAUTICAL MATTERS.

THE rest of the Christmas holidays passed in a manner very agreeable to Harry, but as what occurred to him after his visit to Overblow does not much concern the progress of our history, we shall pass over it as rapidly as possible, in order to arrive the sooner at a more eventful period of his life. Greenfield went back to Bradford, and before the holidays were over, Harry returned his visit by staying a week in the town, during which he went to three dances, an experience quite new to him, and which, limited as it was, had a tendency to remove a little of his shyness and rusticity. In memory of his exploit at Overblow, Mr. Healaugh sent the bull's head to Bilisbury Grange, very tastefully arranged in a sort of trophy by a clever local taxidermist; and when Harry came home from Bradford he found this trophy in the hall, with the fox's brush immediately beneath it. Amongst his fire-arms the Squire's rifle now held a distinguished place. It was a very strong, accurate, and valuable weapon, much better adapted to the education of a young sportsman than Greenfield's lighter and prettier toy. Harry set up a target in a safe place on the Bilisbury estate, and practised

every day in a manner that would have done credit to a volunteer at Wimbledon.

The hunting incident led to some intercourse between Bilsbury and Overblow. Harry rode over to call, and was kindly received by Miss Healaugh in the Squire's absence. Alice ventured to talk to him a little, for which she was rebuked after his departure. Miss Healaugh came to call upon Mrs. Blount, and this made a little variety in the old lady's extremely quiet existence. Whatever may have been the faults of the Squire's sister, she could recognize the merits of a fellow-creature when there did not seem to be any real or imaginary reason for feeling jealous of her. Mrs. Blount, for the present, at least, could not offer any imaginable ground of jealousy. Her social position was a shade inferior to that of the lady of Overblow. Nobody in the neighbourhood studied heraldry or pedigree very minutely, and even Miss Healaugh herself could neither have told you the history of her family (though it *had* a history) nor described her own coat of arms, though it was one of the oldest coats in England, and (like all such) extremely simple. But this ignorance of detail did not prevent the good lady from being perfectly conscious of the antiquity of her house, and all the country people, notwithstanding their innocence of historical lore, had a tradition to the same general effect. Indeed Miss Healaugh relied rather too much upon her family history, for in these days a pedigree does not go for very much, unless it is well supported by wealth and education, and a knowledge of the ways of the world, in all of which Miss Healaugh was rather deficient. But this did not prevent her from considering herself Mrs. Blount's superior—a good thing for the intercourse between them, as the genuine simplicity and humility of

Mrs. Blount's character made it quite easy for her to put up with assumptions of superiority, whilst her new visitor would not have tolerated them quite so easily. Perhaps even the very height of the ground upon which Overblow House was situated may have been one reason for Miss Healaugh's pride of station, for she thereby felt herself lifted up above the ordinary level of mankind. It is true that the maidservants at Overblow were in a still more elevated position, as they always slept in the garrets.

Harry went back to Dr. Templeman's after the holidays, and found most of his old schoolfellows there, with the exception of James Wade, whose father, at his own request, had sent him to an agricultural establishment where scientific farming was taught, both in theory and practice. Here Wade got on swimmingly (not, however, as he swam in the river), and prepared himself for his true vocation, which was the life of a wealthy farmer. His old schoolfellows heard no more about him, and for the present he drops entirely out of this history, but may possibly re-appear after many pages.

The course of events at Brambleby ran smoothly enough during the second half of Harry's existence there. He was glad to meet with Calverley again, and to return to his former condition of nominal fagship under him. When the fine spring weather came the oar was resumed in leisure hours with decided evidence of progress, and Harry promised to become one of the best members of the boys' crew. That second half at Dr. Templeman's was in fact (although the young gentleman did not become aware of it until long afterwards) one of the very happiest spaces of time in a life brightened by more than an ordinary share of happiness. He had the cheering sense of progress in all his work and play; he had become quite accustomed

to the place; he was understood and appreciated both by his masters and fellow-pupils, so that, instead of the unpleasant sense of being an outsider, which had troubled him at the beginning of the first half year, he had now the agreeable feeling of belonging to the school and being perfectly at home in it. There was a friendly rivalry between him and Greenfield in many things, which stimulated both of them without producing the slightest shadow of jealousy or unfriendly feeling; they worked heartily side by side with the declared intention of taking the conceit out of each other, but the victor always took his victory without crowing about it, and the vanquished accepted his defeat without irritation. As a general rule, Harry got on better than Greenfield in classics, but Greenfield generally beat him in modern languages and mathematics. Greenfield had a decided turn for scientific studies, and was already beginning to think seriously of being a civil engineer.

About the end of May a little event occurred which, however trifling in itself, was of great importance to this history. The carrier brought a deal box, about a yard long, addressed to Mr. Calverley. It was delivered at dinner-time, and Calverley said to Harry, "Just come to my room after dinner. I have something to show you."

Harry went according to his invitation, and found Calverley just beginning to open the box with a hammer and chisel.

"What d'you suppose is inside it?" he asked.

Harry had not the least idea. "Perhaps a brace of pistols," he said, for his mind had been running on fire-arms a good deal ever since Mr. Healaugh gave him the rifle.

Calverley had now got the lid off, but nothing was

visible as yet, except a quantity of newspapers squeezed into irregular lumps. Harry's curiosity was very much excited : his friend perceived this, and amused himself by tantalizing him.

"They would be very big pistols to occupy such a box as this. No, you're wrong there. Come, I'll help you a little ; it's a sort of inanimate fish, more resembling the nautilus than any other ; or shall I say that it is a sea bird, that cannot exactly fly, though it has wings ? No ; you need not seek it in the realms of nature, for it is the work of man, and the most perfect, in my opinion, of all his works."

Whilst talking in this way Calverley was throwing out the lumps of crushed newspapers, and came at last to the precious thing itself, which he lifted delicately from the box and placed upon the table. It was a model of a cutter yacht, perfectly beautiful, but only the hull, and no rigging was visible as yet.

"As it's Wednesday afternoon, and you've nothing particular to do, just stop with me, will you, till we rig this thing properly ? Here are all the spars, sails, and cordage at the bottom of the box, and here is a drawing, done to scale, with everything in its right place."

I suppose that every English boy, worthy of the name, likes to see anything of the nature of a ship, from the six-penny toy with the printed label, "Warranted to swim," gummed in the interior, to the mighty ship of war that carries its tremendous armament over the stormy seas. Harry had seen and possessed toy-boats, and he had seen great ships in the Humber, but never yet had he beheld anything like this beautiful model. For this was not a toy at all, but the serious work of one of the most scientific builders in England, made just as carefully as



the real yacht it represented, and in fact bearing the same relation to it that a statuette bears to a statue.

"Do you mean to sail this on the river?" inquired Harry, who from his inexperience in such matters saw nothing in this new acquisition but the means of a little practical amusement.

"I'm not sure that I shall ever put it upon water at all, and if I do, it will be on a quiet little fishpond in a garden, with smooth lawn all round it. This model is too perfect to be risked much, and was not intended for practical work of that kind, though it would sail well enough if properly ballasted. And, to my taste, there is not much satisfaction in sailing a boat that is too small for you to get on board of her and steer according to the necessities of the moment. It is positively vexatious to see a boat that would behave perfectly well, if you could be on board to steer her properly, left to the mercy of every gust of wind, without a crew to ease her ever so little. I never felt the need of Liliputians so much as when I have watched those little vessels without crews that boys amuse themselves with upon the *Serpentine*."

"Then is this boat only to be an ornament for your room?" asked Harry in a tone of decided disappointment.

"Not precisely that, either, my inexperienced young friend. Know thou that this small thing is chiefly interesting as being the miniature presentment of a much greater thing. It is called the '*Alaria*,' from a marine plant; but there is also another '*Alaria*,' a new yacht, now anchored in the Mersey, which belongs to my brother and me—that is to say, I have a small share in her, but she was chiefly built at my brother's expense. Now the model that you see before you is the exact counterpart, on a small scale, of our twenty-five ton cutter in the Mersey,

and you may conceive how interesting the toy is to me, when I tell you that, although part-owner of the yacht 'Alaria,' I have never yet had the pleasure of seeing her, except in this miniature image. And whilst we are rigging her, just let me tell you of a little scheme of mine that rather concerns yourself. What should you say to a cruise in the 'Alaria' during the summer holidays? As soon as ever I have done with Dr. Templeman I go straight to the Mersey, and shall sleep on board the 'Alaria' the very night of my arrival. Come with me, will you? We will go to some jolly wild region up in the north and refresh ourselves with wild scenery and tossing seas after this sleepy stupid Brambleby. Do you know that for the last few months I've hardly been able to endure Brambleby at all, with its tiresome quiet streets, where nothing is to be seen, and its sluggish ditch of a river as bad as a canal? I wouldn't live the year round in such a hole for anything. If we had not our work to keep us from thinking about the horrible dullness of our existence here we should all perish of *ennui*. Come, will you accept the rank of midshipman on board the 'Alaria'?"

Harry did not hesitate for an instant. "Of course I will," he said, emphatically enough to leave no possibility of doubt as to his acceptance of Calverley's proposition. "I'll go with you wherever you go, and I'll do whatever you tell me to do!"

Calverley knew what the answer would be, so he felt very little surprise at his young friend's eagerness. "But must not you consult Mrs. Blount first?" he quietly suggested.

In the first flush of his new maritime enthusiasm I am ashamed to say that our hero had as completely forgotten his grandmother as if that admirable old lady had never

existed. Calverley's observation recalled her, however, to Harry's recollection with a vividness that was almost painful to him. "Yes, I must," he said, rather gravely, "but I have no doubt she will consent."

They then set to work heartily to rig the model. Calverley had an accurate knowledge of a cutter's anatomy, which though far from being so complex as that of a great ship (which, again, is a mere trifle to the anatomy of a mouse), is still rather difficult just at first, indeed nobody can recollect it until he has seen a vessel at work, and got accustomed to calling everything by its right name. Calverley made the rigging of the model an occasion for a little practical teaching; and as my young readers will require to know just a little of these things, in order to understand the yacht voyage in which Harry is to take a part, it may be as well to repeat Calverley's lesson verbatim. The reader, who is already well acquainted with the subject, will, I hope, not be offended by the introduction of a didactic passage, but simply skip it.

"If once you understand two or three great principles," Calverley began, "the little details will become clear to you, without any further trouble on your part; but if you won't take pains enough to master the leading principles on which a sailing-boat depends for its life and motion, then the details will always be unintelligible to you. The thing in nature which on the whole comes nearest to the anatomy of a ship is a bat. You know well enough what a bat is like?"

"To be sure I do; I've shot one at Bilsbury."

"Very well. You may wonder that I choose a bat as an example rather than a fish or a duck, but I do so because, on the whole, the bat is more complete, though a duck can sit on the water as a vessel does. Now, to begin with, the

bat has a skeleton of bones, and the vessel has a skeleton of timbers and spars ; the bat has a skin, and so has the body of the boat ; the bat has muscles to move its limbs, and the ship has muscles also, which are ropes, to move its movable spars. When the bat flies it uses its muscles to stretch out its wings, and the wings themselves are composed of membranes, stretched from bone to bone, and held flat by the muscles that move the bones. The wings of a vessel are its sails, which are stretched by spars, and the spars are held in their places by ropes. But, as I said, the anatomy of a ship is very much simpler than that of an animal. For example, the trunk of a bat's body is all covered with muscle, but there are no muscles on a ship's body between the skin and the ribs. Then, again, an animal's muscles are always sheathed and covered, for their protection ; whereas the muscles of a ship, and its bones, too, except its ribs, are all quite bare. If you fancy a skeleton, with strings instead of muscles, and somebody pulling the strings, so as to make the arms of the skeleton move about, you have a good elementary notion of rigging."

"That would be something like puppets that are moved by strings held in the showman's fingers."

"Yes, and you may carry your comparison farther still for as the puppet has no mind of its own, though it seems to have one when the showman makes it perform, so the vessel, though it has wooden bones, and rope muscles, and oak ribs, an oaken skin, a copper epidermis, and canvas wings, has neither a brain nor a nervous system when there is nobody on board. The captain is the ship's brain and the crew are its nervous system, for they communicate the brain's orders to the muscles which move the bones. A ship is a dead thing till it gets a crew, but with a crew it

is scarcely a metaphor to say that it is alive, for then it has most of the characteristics of a living being."

Here Calverley paused, and seemed lost in admiring contemplation of the model before him.

"Shall we not rig it?" asked Harry.

"Yes, in a minute; but just let me ask you one question. Have you any idea how a sailing vessel is made to go?"

"The wind blows it along, I suppose."

"Yes, that's the elementary idea of sailing, sailing with a fair wind, and being simply blown along, as you say. No doubt the first man who sailed practically on water had no theory beyond that. He found that the wind would blow him from one end of a lake to the other, and took advantage of it when it suited his purpose. But you see this theory does not explain how a vessel can sail against the wind."

"I never thought of that."

"Evidently you did not; but if you found yourself on a lee shore, with a strong wind blowing you straight on the rocks, and an inaccessible precipice, about four hundred feet high, as the only land in sight, then you would think it very desirable to be able to sail against the wind, and if anybody on board could teach you to do so, you would feel uncommonly obliged to him; so hadn't you better learn now, whilst there is no danger?"

"I can't understand how ships go against the wind. Of course I know they do so, or else they would all be driven on shore, and lost. Besides, I've read about beating to windward in Captain Marryat's tales, but I haven't the least notion how it's done."

"The great secret of sailing is the resistance of water to a body of large size that is not shaped to cut the water in

that direction. Any one who had never thought about the matter would suppose that the resistance of water was a great impediment to sailing, whereas it is just what makes sailing possible. A balloon cannot be directed because it encounters no resistance whatever, but if it could float in a calm stratum of air, and have sails in the wind above, the resistance of the calm air would allow of sailing and steering. If the water offered no resistance the vessel would drift to leeward. But shipbuilders make vessels to encounter as much resistance as possible on their sides, and as little as possible at their cutwater."

"Still I don't see how that can make a vessel go against the wind."

"You need not be in a hurry, you will understand it all quite clearly before we have done. But I wanted you first to notice about a ship's hull, and, without talking of her sails for the present, that she is so contrived as to offer a great deal of resistance on her side and very little at her prow. There is a destructive instrument often used in lake-fishing, and called an otter, which might be of use to explain the motions of a vessel, for if you understood the otter you would understand the action of keel and cutwater, and that would be a good beginning. The otter is simply a light piece of board, heavily weighted with lead along one of its edges, so that if you put it in water it will stand up like a wall. To this a piece of string is attached, so as to make a triangle with the board when the string is stretched, and from this string a long line goes to the hand of the operator. Now, when he pulls the line, the otter does not come towards him, unless the string be exactly perpendicular to the board, but darts off in another direction, which depends upon the angle of the string. Here you have the problem of sailing in a very complete form,

although you have no sails, for the otter represents a ship, and the line from the otter to the fisherman represents the force of the wind acting upon sails, whilst the fisherman himself represents the lee-shore."

"But why does not the otter come to the fisherman when he pulls?"

"It is difficult to answer your question without explaining what is called the decomposition of forces, and it is difficult to explain that without diagrams and theorems. The action of a force can never be understood until it is, at least in imagination, decomposed into other forces which would produce exactly the same effect if they acted each in its own way, all at the same time. Now, on account of the angle at which the otter is supposed to be floating relatively to the fisherman, his force acting upon it may be (in quite a certain scientific way) resolved into two other forces which I will call by human names, Dick and Tom. Dick is a very big force and would pull the otter to shore, though not exactly to the spot where the fisherman is standing; Tom is a small force comparatively, and he would pull the otter out to sea in the direction of its keel, or at right angles to Dick's force, which acts perpendicularly to the keel, but Tom would not be able to do this unless Dick's force were neutralized. It is neutralized by the resistance of the water to the wall-side of the otter, so Tom is left at liberty to exercise his small force, and he pulls the otter out to sea, or in other words the ship into the wind at a certain angle. I call Dick, you know, the force which drives a ship broadside on to a lee-shore, and he cannot be resisted when the vessel has a light draught of water and no keel, as is the case with a gondola for instance, but the water resists him effectually when there is a deep keel, and then Tom has his own way and drives the ship

to windward at a certain angle, so as to eat into the wind. Now if once you can gain anything at a certain angle, you have gained everything, for after that you have only to make zig-zags, like the approaches of besiegers to a fortress, and you can eat into the wind for miles and miles ; as far as you like, in fact."

"There are many more things to be learned about the hull," Calverley went on, "but you want to begin rigging, so let us go to work, only just try and remember the names of things, for you will need them all when we go to sea, and a little quiet study on the model will prepare you better than anything else. The deck, you see, is all ready for us to put the mast in its place, and there is a hole for it. If you look down through the hole you will see a block of wood with a smaller hole in it, and this is called the step. To step a mast is to put it in its place, so that the lower end of the mast, which sailors call its foot, shall be in the step. There, we have stepped our mast ! And now just let me tell you that the position of this hole on the deck, though it looks a simple matter, because it is made ready for us in the model, having been settled by a great deal of science and experience for boats of this shape and size, is in reality one of the most important things in the whole construction of a ship, for if it were put a little farther forward the yacht (with her present sails, I mean) would fall away from the wind, and be difficult, if not impossible, to steer ; whereas if the mast were stepped farther back, she would alway be running up into the wind, and be equally difficult to steer, though for a different reason. There is nothing in the construction of a yacht more delicate than the fixing of the mast's position ; and it is so for many reasons that you could not understand yet if I explained them. Well, we



have set up our mast, but it must have ropes to support it. A mast could be made to do without these ropes, or shrouds, as sailors call them, and often is so in very small boats, but then you see in a large boat or a ship the mast would have to be of such a tremendous thickness if it were to do without shrouds, that it is much better to employ them. As it is only the mainmast that we have set up yet, we begin by fastening the mainmast shrouds only, those for the topmast are yet to come. You observe that on the sides of the model there are two projecting bits of plank, like little shelves. These are called the channels, and under them there are three plates fastened to the yacht's ribs, which are called the chain plates. It is by means of these that the strain on the shrouds is resisted, as their blocks are fastened to the chain plates.

“And now just let me ask you to carry in your mind one little distinction, which will save you a good deal of puzzling afterwards. The mainmast, which we have just fixed with its shrouds, is the only fixed spar in the whole vessel. When a yacht is laid up for the winter, the mainmast remains in its place, but other spars are either sent ashore or taken in on deck. During a cruise, when a yacht is properly commanded, the topmast and bowsprit are often shifted ; and so are the boom and gaff. All these things are called spars indiscriminately ; it is the general word for all sticks that have to do with the rigging. This spar is the bowsprit. The word sprit means a spar, which is used to stretch a sail in some vessels ; and bowsprit means a spar going out at the bow of the vessel, and used to stretch a sail out beyond the vessel in front of her. Now, you see these projections on the deck ; these are called the bowsprit bitts, and they hold the bowsprit at the end of it which is on deck, but without fixing it you see ;

in fact there is a little rack-wheel, to push the bowsprit out and in, as occasion may require. When the yacht has a great deal of sail on, the bowsprit is pushed out, to admit of a larger sail; but when the yacht carries little canvas, the bowsprit is brought more on deck. Now, just as the mainmast has shrouds to support it, so has the bowsprit; but as the latter is pushed in and out according to circumstances, its shrouds have a running tackle. There, you see these tiny blocks; they are called the bowsprit shroud tackle. But, besides these, the bowsprit has a sort of third shroud beneath it, fastened to the yacht's cutwater; only this is not called a shroud, it is called a bobstay, and it has running tackle too. Now we come to the topmast. It slips up and down just in front of the mainmast, and can be easily fixed or 'fiddled,' as sailors call it, and taken down again. It has shrouds of its own; and to give them more spread, you have these cross-trees which you saw me fixing just now. These cross-trees and shrouds all come down in preparing for bad weather, so you perceive that sailors have something to do, in fact the rigging of a ship is never done, something is always being altered in the rigging to suit the weather. It's no use troubling you just now about little details; but you must know the spars, and there are only three of them to learn now. The biggest of these is the boom, which stretches out the sail from the mainmast, and it just works rather loosely on the mast from right to left, like a door on its hinges. The other spar that works on the mainmast is the gaff, so there is not much to learn about the spars of the mainmast. The topsail is stretched from the gaff to a spar that works on the topmast, and is called the gaff-topsail yard."

Whilst Calverley's tongue was delivering this little lecture his fingers were very busy rigging the model, which he did with great skill, as he had seen a good deal of

yachting in his different vocations. He handled the little threads and strings, which represented the ropes, in the patient delicate way that a good angler has with fishing tackle, quietly unravelling here and there, hardly ever making a mistake, and interrupting his lecture from time to time, in order to talk to himself in a language almost entirely unintelligible to Harry Blount, so full was it of nautical terms. At length the model, after about two hours of steady work, stood completely rigged, and with all her sails set, on which Harry's delight reached the point of downright enthusiasm, and Calverley himself could not take his eyes off the thing of beauty that stood on his table, propped up by books, to keep it from heeling over, and looking as if it needed some tranquil sea of Lilliput to exhibit all its powers.

"Harry!" he said at last, "upon my word I do think that a cutter yacht is the prettiest thing that ever was made by man! No picture can be so pretty as that, unless a yacht were the subject of the picture. And if you could just see the little ship of which this is but the image, yielding gracefully to a lively breeze, and darting away like a kitten, you would catch the yachting madness at once. By-the-by, I ought to tell you the name of the sails. There are only four sails to learn, for we need not now perplex ourselves about racing-gear. This biggest sail is the mainsail. The highest is the gaff-topsail, the one just before the mast is the foresail, and the one carried out by the bowsprit is the jib. A yacht has sails of different dimensions on board to be used according to circumstances, thus in very wild weather indeed the mainsail would be replaced by a try-sail. The running ropes that are used to haul and lower sails and spars are all called halyards, but each has its special name, as gaff-topsail halyards, for instance, and so on. These rows of little strings on the sails, hanging like the

tails of ermines on fur are the reefs, and they are used simply to make the sails less when the wind blows harder. There are four rows of them on the mainsail, three on the foresail, but none on either the gaff-topsail or the jib, because when it is time to reef the mainsail in a cutter yacht it is of course time to take down the topsail altogether, and if it is time to reef the foresail, the jib had better be taken in first. Now I don't intend to lecture any more just now, for I've told you more than you will remember, but here's the model, and if you will come pretty frequently to my room, you will gradually learn all about it. Every part of a ship, however small, has its own distinct name, for if it had not there would be no safety, as orders could not be properly given."

"Where shall we go for our cruise?"

"I don't know exactly, but my brother intends to cruise about the west of Scotland to begin with. Where we will go afterwards I cannot tell. Of course you know the geography of the west of Scotland, you know what numbers of islands there are, and what a great many salt-water lochs that go a long way into the mainland. Well, my brother is a geologist and an amateur artist, and there's nothing he likes so much as yachting about those places and hammering away at rocks and taking sketches. But once in his yacht it's utterly impossible to say where he may go, for he has a most roving disposition. He has no profession, no wife, no responsibilities except those of a Christian and a gentleman, so he is as free as the wind that blows. As for me, Harry, I'm only a younger son, and shall have to work for my living, so I can't go with my brother, except in the holidays a little. But I do love a yacht, and yachting, though it is not altogether so free from hardship as some stay-at-home people imagine it to be. We have fine weather sometimes and fair winds, but

sometimes too we have bad weather and foul winds, and the part of the world we are going to is not the most likely place to escape them. But yachting is a grand amusement either in summer breezes or in storm and tempest! I long to see how this new vessel the 'Alaria' will behave herself! I see the model differs in some very important respects from the old yacht, and that my brother has adopted a good many recent improvements, so I am impatient to see the effect of them."

It was now time for Harry to go to the class-room, but he could think of nothing that did not very soon lead him to the subject of yachting and the projected cruise. He learned his lesson very badly that evening, to the surprise of Mr. Barton, the tailmaster, who was not accustomed to any negligence or absence of mind on Harry's part. When he got to bed at last his imagination was so active in trying to realize what yachting must be like, that it was just as if he had drunk about sixteen cups of strong green tea, and it was two o'clock in the morning before he fell asleep. When he did so at last it was only to dream of mainsails, jibs, booms, and cordage, which all got inextricably confounded together in his mind, and of stormy seas amongst the Hebrides, with the "Alaria" struggling amongst them under a double-reefed mainsail. At last he awoke to the bright sunny morning, and the first thing he thought was "all dreams, nothing better than dreams; here am I at old humdrum Brambleby still;" but the second thought that occurred to him when he was rather more wide awake was, "No, it is better than a dream; Calverley's model yacht that I saw yesterday is a reality, and the 'Alaria' is a reality at Liverpool, and my yacht voyage will be realized in the holidays. *That's* something worth looking forward to!"

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### AN OLD WOMAN'S HEART.

INTOXICATED with delight about this project of Calverley's, Harry wrote off a joyous letter to his grandmother, telling her all about it, and asking her permission to go with the "Alaria," in a manner which plainly showed how fully he counted upon its being granted. Now the effect of this letter on Mrs. Blount's mind may be readily imagined by the reader if he will consider a few little circumstances. The old lady had not found it altogether an easy matter to separate herself from Harry for the purposes of his education; however, she had bravely accepted the necessity, being fully determined that no selfishness of hers should prevent him from receiving a manly training. The one thing that enabled her to bear his long absences was the existence of six weeks' holiday at Midsummer, and a month's holiday at Christmas. With reference to this particular midsummer she had long cherished a little scheme of her own. She and Harry, according to this secret scheme, were to have a little tour together in the English Lake District, which she had visited many years before, but which Harry had never seen; and after spending about three weeks in the Lake District, they were to pass the other three weeks quietly together at Bilsbury. Harry, as we have seen, was now looking forward to his

yachting expedition with great interest and a boy's eagerness, but Mrs. Blount had also on her own part indulged in pleasurable anticipations, not so full of rapturous excitement as Harry's, yet agreeable to a person of her years. She had thought of the pleasure, not altogether untinged with sadness, with which she would revisit Windermere and Keswick, where she had been for the first time with her son many years before, and she now wished to enjoy the feeling that her lost son was in a measure restored to her in Harry, who was just the same age that his father had been when Mrs. Blount made her first excursion to Westmoreland; in short, the old lady had not merely planned an outing to see mountains and lakes, but a renewal of old memories that were very dear to her, in the midst of a present which (as she gratefully acknowledged) had its own great happiness and consolations.

The reader will at once perceive how rudely Harry's letter shattered all these little plans, in which the sad feelings of the bereaved mother and the gladness of the affectionate grandmother were each to have found a certain satisfaction. A lad of Harry's age, thinking of nothing but his own amusement, could scarcely have delicacy enough to appreciate Mrs. Blount's motives in going to the lake district, even if they had been distinctly explained to him, and she was the last person in the world to attempt such an explanation. He had not heard that she intended any excursion for the summer, and if this scheme had been mentioned he would have seen only its practical side—the possible mountain-climbing and boating on the lakes. But his letter contained another cause of pain to his grandmother, which the utmost stretch of his bold boyish imagination could not possibly have guessed at. Ever since the loss of the "Guadalquivir," the ship in which

Harry's parents had perished on their return voyage from Santander, Mrs. Blount had felt a horror of the sea which all her good sense and natural strength of character were utterly unable to overcome. The sea appeared to her more than pitiless; it appeared thirsty for human life, thirsty for the lives of those nearest and dearest to her. Harry's proposal to go yachting filled her mind with the most terrible anxiety and apprehension. The cruel waves had swallowed up her son, and now perhaps they would swallow up him who was son and grandson to her in one; her hope, her darling, the stay of her old age, the light of cheerful youth that brightened the whole world for her and made life sweet to her still! She shuddered when she thought of the iron ship that lay deep in the Bay of Biscay with the bones of those she loved lying in one of its cabins, and the fish swimming in and out. Her excited imagination dived as it were below the sea, found the "Guadalquivir" where she lay, sought through the cabins one by one amongst the silent skeletons that inhabited them, and at last, guided by some token, some trinket that she knew, discovered in one little cabin what remained of her son and her son's young wife, after which her thoughts fixed themselves, and strayed and sought no more. And as Harry lay awake in his little bed at Brambleby, with the excitement of hope and the anticipation of adventure, so Mrs. Blount lay awake in her bed at Bilsbury Grange, suffering over again all the miseries and all the horrors of the most terrible event in her experience.

The next morning she came down to the breakfast-room punctually, looking rather pale and tired, but with an expression of great firmness on her countenance. She read prayers as usual, with her little household in the room; they were prayers composed by an anonymous



writer who, whether clergyman or layman, knew the heart's needs, and gave them a fitting though simple expression. One little passage the lady read with more than ordinary emphasis. It was not very new or original, for the desire which it expresses is a common one, but Mrs. Blount felt its suitableness to her present needs.

"Give us strength, O Lord, to overcome our natural weakness; enable us to live for others rather than ourselves, and increase our trust in Thee."

When she had eaten her solitary breakfast, and the things were taken away, she took her writing-desk and opened it, and wrote a few lines to Harry. And the lines that she wrote were these—

"MY DEAR BOY,—

"Mr. Calverley is really very kind to you, and I have no doubt it will do you good to see fresh scenery and a new kind of life in his company, so, although I should have liked to see a little more of you during the holidays, I give my consent to the yacht voyage. You will be prudent, I hope, for my sake.

"Your affectionate old grandmother,

"SARAH BLOUNT."

When Harry got the letter he took it simply as a matter of course, but that line about seeing rather more of him in the holidays gave him, I am happy to say, a perceptible twinge of conscience. "I wish grandmamma could go with us," he had the grace to think and say to himself, "but I don't think she would enjoy it." Harry might have added, that there would probably be but little enjoyment for himself, of the kind that he was looking forward to, with a lady on board, somewhat needlessly anxious for his safety.

Mrs. Blount, having made up her mind to bear the coming trouble of the yacht voyage, did what she could to think of the benefit to Harry. "They say that women are not fit to bring up a boy," she thought, "and that woman-bred boys are always milksops and never men, so I must be on my guard against my own feminine weakness, and give Harry every opportunity for becoming manly in the best sense. Yachting is a most innocent amusement, though I fear it is very dangerous, and I have every reason to be glad that Harry is associating himself with such a companion as Mr. Calverley, who has done him so much good already."

After that, the good lady struggled against her fears with great determination, and to keep herself from getting morbid by dwelling upon the dangers of the sea, she very wisely invited a certain old maid from Brambleby to go and stay with her. As the old maid in question had never lost a relative upon the ocean, but had made a good many little trips without accident in steamers from Liverpool to Bangor, Liverpool to the Isle of Man, and so on, her dominant association with the waves of ocean was not the idea of death by drowning, but the less lugubrious idea of sea-sickness, from which she suffered terribly, and which she could talk about for hours together. This did Mrs. Blount more good than anything, for it acted as a diversion to her fears, and as the time approached for Harry's departure, his grandmother's principal and most immediate anxiety concerning him had reference to certain well-known and very disagreeable effects of wave-motion on the diaphragm, not likely to be diminished by any ingenious contrivances on board the little "Alaria."

## CHAPTER XXV.

### IN WHICH OUR HERO EMBARKS.

HARRY BLOUNT was anxious to get to sea, and so are you too, very likely, my young readers, at least in the pages of this story-book. As for me I share your eagerness to the utmost, and want to get into the train with Master Harry for Liverpool and see the docks, and the forest of masts (rather a trite expression, but no other would be so true) and the wide Mersey, and have a look at that snug little cutter the *Alaria*.

That school at Brambleby seems but a dull place to me now, with Dr. Templeman in his study lecturing the private pupils, and that poor, good, honest drudge Mr. Barton teaching the younger boys in the class-room. I want to get out of that playground with its four brick walls, out upon the open sea where there are no brick walls to limit the range of vision, nothing but the rounding of the great orb of the earth, with perhaps a distant ship or two gliding down the other side of it till only their topsails are visible above the gigantic dome of salt-water. I want to sniff the fresh cool briny breeze once more, and hear the music of halyard and windlass, and the song of the wind in the cordage, and the ripple against the sheathing and the play and splash of the waves about

the bows ! Surely after a good half-year's work we may give play for a few weeks to the grand old maritime spirit which made England what it is, and founded America, and which dwells in us still like an albatross in an aviary, longing to exercise its wings, in the great circus of the sea horizons.

Harry had given so much attention to the model of the *Alaria*, that by this time he knew every rope and every corner of the sails better than his multiplication table, and when the summer holidays came at last, Calverley said, "Well, Harry, I got a letter this morning from my brother, and he urges us to start as soon as we possibly can. What is to prevent us from setting off immediately ?"

"I *must* go to say good-bye to my grandmother, you know. Could not you come with me, it would help to give her confidence if she saw you and heard you talk ? I believe she thinks yachting is very dangerous, and as you have escaped the perils of it she might feel rather more hopeful after seeing you."

It was therefore arranged that at the break-up Calverley and Harry were to stay two nights at Bilsbury Grange. They did so, and Mrs. Blount made Calverley's acquaintance personally, which eased her mind a good deal, as she found him very much to her taste. His quiet easy manners had a tranquillizing effect upon the old lady's feelings. In any case she felt sure that Harry would not be with a wild or reckless companion, though perhaps if she had known how much cool daring entered into Calverley's gentle nature she would have been almost as much alarmed as by recklessness itself.

When the morning of departure came, Mrs. Blount controlled herself so perfectly, that Harry did not suspect any effort on her part.

"Good-bye, Harry," she said quite cheerfully, "always keep a letter for me ready written on board, and post it whenever you have an opportunity. But where am I to address letters for Harry, Mr. Calverley?"

"Oban will be the first place, and after that I really don't know yet, but Harry will write a line from Liverpool when we have seen my brother."

Just as they were saying good-bye, Minimus, Harry's little dog, jumped into the carriage. Harry was putting him out, much to the dog's grief, when Calverley said, "Let him come with us, a dog on board is a pleasant companion."

So Minimus was of the party, and they drove away to the railway station.

When they once got fairly on the road, our hero felt that first sensation of detachment from any fixed spot, which is the essence of travelling. Even the familiar roads about Bilsbury seemed new to him in his new state of mind and feeling. It was a delicious morning in the latter half of June, the trees were all in their rich summer foliage, and the country looked especially beautiful to our travellers because they had been shut up for the preceding months in Brambleby.

There are times in life which we remember ever afterwards, times when we had not a care, and all looked bright before us. This was such a time for Harry Blount. There was not a cloud in the sky, and there was not a cloud on his happiness—no, this is not quite absolutely accurate, though it is very near the perfect truth. The exact truth is that there were one or two little white clouds somewhere in the sky that you might find if you sought for them diligently, and so there were one or two little white clouds in Harry's mind. He felt now that it would

have been more dutiful to stay a week or a fortnight at the Grange before starting—but then the Calverleys were both impatient to set sail—and he felt as the carriage passed the meadow where his horse was out at grass, and a neigh of recognition hailed the carriage horses, which they answered, he felt, I say, that whatever might be the pleasures of the unknown which lay before him, good old Bilsbury Grange was not a place to be left at any time without regret, especially at such a sweet season of the year as this.

Once in the railway it seemed as if the locomotive could not run too fast. The journey began in slow trains on a branch line, but afterwards they got upon that great artery which is called the Lancashire and Yorkshire railway, and here they caught an express, which whirled them along out of quiet agricultural Yorkshire into rich manufacturing Yorkshire, till after a glimpse up the beautiful Todmorden valley, they crossed the Lancashire border, rattled through that long dismal hole the Summit Tunnel, stopped a minute at Rochdale, and sped in a great hurry through the very rich but very ugly country beyond, till at length the tall brick chimneys and the long monotonous rows of cottages got thicker and thicker, and they were in the outskirts of Manchester, a region enough to put anybody but a mill-owner into very low spirits, though the June sunshine penetrated the coal-smoke even here, and gave the land something like a smile. Then the railway ran between tall brick buildings that hemmed it in closely on each side till it seemed like going along the bottom of a very deep brick ditch ; there were glimpses of fearful streets which made Harry say he would not like to live there, and indeed there was a wonderful difference between Bilsbury Grange and the gloomy back slums of Manchester, between the

sweet English country with its trees, meadows, and pure air, and the horrors of an English town, for which, when they are at their worst, you can hardly find a parallel in all Europe.

Just as they were gliding into the station at slackened speed, Calverley looked at his watch. "I thought of lunching here," he said, "but we haven't a minute to lose if we mean to catch the Liverpool train, there is a distance between the stations."

Then he put down the window, and as soon as they got near the platform, hailed a cab. When the luggage was on the top and the travellers were fairly inside, Calverley said, "The other station—catch Liverpool express if you can—no time to lose," and away went the noisy vehicle through the streets of Manchester, leaving the black old Church on the left, and afterwards the Exchange on the right, and then going along the main street, which looks very like London when you are fairly in it.

They were just in time to catch the Liverpool train, but when they were safely ensconced in it, they both admitted that it was a pity they had not had a quiet hour at Manchester for dining purposes. Harry was desperately hungry by this time, so when they got to Liverpool he listened very willingly to a proposition of Calverley's, who said, "Now if you agree with me, we will just get a comfortable dinner at the hotel before going to seek up the Alaria, for there's no telling what sort of fare my brother will offer us, and we may have to wait a long time before his dinner hour."

The two friends accordingly went to one of the best hotels in the town, and ordered a good dinner, which was very soon ready. Many such a dinner has been eaten in Liverpool, because they have a certain sauce or seasoning

there which is not to be procured at any inland town, and that seasoning is the peculiar feeling that you are eating your last meal on shore before a voyage of maritime adventure. It is rather a melancholy feeling perhaps, rather a disagreeable sauce, for people who are merely about to become passive passengers on board some ocean steamer, where they expect nothing better than day after day of monotonous sea-views and monotonous sea-sickness also—to such people the last dinner in a Liverpool hotel is a present pleasure spoiled by anticipations of future misery, and they may sing to each other the French ditty,

Mangez-en bien aujourd'hui, car peut-être  
Ni vous ni moi n'en mangerons demain !

Of our two travellers, however, the elder knew himself to be proof against sea-sickness, and the younger, in the flush of life and hope, would not condescend to give it so much as a thought. So they ate very heartily at their little table, and drank some good wine too, but not in such quantity as to trouble the clearness of their ideas, though it certainly tended to augment Master Harry's feelings of self-confidence, which were already quite strong enough to carry him through any little difficulties that were likely to be in reserve for him. Just as they were drinking their wine the travellers were both very much surprised by the entrance of a gentleman into the coffee-room who just glanced round whilst the waiter said to him—

“ We don't happen to have a private sitting-room disengaged, sir, but if your lady has no objection, you might dine in this coffee-room perhaps,” then he added in a lower tone, “ these young gentlemen have just finished and it's very likely you'll have the room quite to yourselves.”

The new-comer was immediately recognized by Harry,



for he was no other than Greenfield's father, and in an instant the whole of the Greenfield family entered the coffee-room together, not excepting our hero's own particular friend.

After hailing each other as cordially as was to be expected, Greenfield and Harry came to a rapid explanation. The family from Bradford had arrived at a sudden decision about their summer excursion, which was to the Isle of Man, so there they were at Liverpool on their way. They had taken beds in the hotel and were to start for Mona the next morning. Greenfield of course knew well enough about Harry's intended yachting expedition, for Harry had scarcely talked of anything else during the last six weeks at Dr. Templeman's, and now that they were together it was distinctly visible to Calverley's eye that if Greenfield had his choice he would rather go in the *Alaria* than in the steamer with the three legs of Man on its paddle-boxes. However, they very soon said good-bye, and our yachtsmen quitted the hotel to go and look up their vessel.

"We will send for the luggage afterwards," said Calverley.

After making some purchases in the excellent Liverpool shops, of things necessary or useful during a yacht voyage, Calverley went to the docks. "Is the *Alaria* in the docks?" his companion asked, when he first saw with astonishment the inextricable confusion of ships' rigging, out of which it seemed scarcely possible that a vessel should even be able to disentangle itself, and went stumbling over great ropes and chains whilst his eyes were looking everywhere but at his feet.

"No; the *Alaria* is anchored six or seven miles from where we are now, up the river, in the broad part of the

Mersey, and near the Cheshire coast. We must take one of the river steamers, which will land us very near the yacht, and then we shall hire a boat to go on board. Meanwhile, as we are walking down to the landing-stage, you may just as well have a look at all this shipping. There is hardly a finer sight in the world."

The effect of the Liverpool docks upon a country-bred boy, from an inland place, is such that he is never likely to forget it during all his life. The colossal *size* of everything is what strikes him most; the prodigious iron rings in the granite blocks of which the pavement under him is composed; the enormous cables in comparison with which the strongest rope used on a farm is mere pack-thread; the gigantic anchors with their mighty flukes and beams, the chains so big that a couple of links would be a burden; the towering masts with long yards swinging ever so high above the deck—all affect the unaccustomed mind with a deep sense of man's intelligence and strength when he contends with the ocean which has strength only and not intelligence. Afterwards, the majesty of this first impression generally wears away, and men walk about the docks as if there were nothing to be seen in them but so much trade and commerce, and yet it is the boy's impression which is the truest, though he knows so little and is simply overwhelmed with wonder. Go to the edge of a great dock and look down into it, between the granite precipice and the curving mass of some huge hull that is not yet laden, and so sits high and lightly upon the water, look down to the opaque green brine that bears the ship, and along her curving sides till their black vastness makes you giddy, then up at her stout masts of pine that were once the pride of some Canadian or Norwegian forest; look at her webs of intricate cordage, her running gear

and tackle, and think of all that weight and strength together, when those sails, now closely furled, are spread to the force of the sea-winds and wetted with the flying foam and spray, when those strong masts are strained under the pressure, and those thousand ropes are not too many for the work they have to do! Fancy that white and gilded figure-head, the calm image of some fabled goddess, now motionless as any marble bust in a museum—fancy that image going forwards and ever forwards into the tempest, still with the same tranquil expression on its countenance, rising on the crests of unnumbered waves, majestically descending into the vales of dark water between them! A ship is grand upon the sea, but she affects the imagination still more strongly when her masts tower above the streets of a city. How puny are all other moving things in comparison with her! Those heavy drags, drawn by sleek elephantine horses, that come to load her, what are they? Even the heavy railway-waggons look like children's toys beside her. How many such Liliputian dishes will be needed before she says, "I am no longer empty, I have enough!"

Another thing that overawed Harry very considerably at the Liverpool docks, was the mere geographical reminding that he got of so many lands beyond the sea. It is all very well to note the West Indies on a map, but when you see a ship that has just come from the West Indies, the ship will wonderfully help you to think of them as a reality. Here were vessels from all the quarters of the earth, from Bombay and Calcutta, from Boston and New York, from Spain, France, Italy, and our own most distant colonies. Here was a Babel of strange tongues, there were dark-skinned picturesque figures that might do for corsairs amongst the isles of Greece, active Americans

with cleverly-built fast-sailing ships, and even in the busy scene were here and there indolent Orientals who lounged on their dirty decks. But the personage who attracted most of Harry's attention was the active British sailor, who was to be studied here in all his glory, walking the streets as if they belonged to him, as well he may, for without his constant services on the wide ocean how could Liverpool ever have existed?

When the two friends got on board the little steamer they saw Liverpool from the river, a great sight also, and met the majestic ships going out to sea with the tide. For the first time in his life Harry heard the loud voice of captain or mate giving orders, and the command always cheerfully and instantaneously repeated by the sailor who rushed to do the work. He saw the great sails dropping down like curtains as they were unfolded to catch the mild evening breeze. They were quite golden in the sunshine, for it was now late afternoon and the sun was sinking in the west, gilding the busy port with his genial rays.

At length the little steamer stopped at a jetty near a village on the Cheshire shore, and our travellers took a small boat in which a couple of strong watermen pulled them out towards a part of the broad river where half-a-dozen yachts lay quietly at anchor. Both Calverley and Harry looked out eagerly for the *Alaria*. There were several cutters and two or three schooners, whose beautiful proportions would at any other time have excited Harry's admiration, but just at present he had eyes for one yacht only.

"That's her," said one of the watermen; "it's that cutter to win'ard of the big schooner there." And a

few more strokes of the oars brought them alongside the *Alaria*.

Calverley's brother, who was a first-rate amateur sailor, was really and truly captain of his own yacht and not a passenger on board of her, so we will call him neither Calverley's brother, in future, nor William Calverley, both of which would be awkward and long, but we will call him simply the Captain.

The Captain, then, was on his deck looking out for the expected arrival, and he hailed the new-comers with a cheery welcome whilst they were still at a little distance from the yacht. When they came alongside, the first person to step on deck was Minimus, who was handed to one of the sailors and found himself, for the first time in his life, fairly on board ship, for the short passage on the river steamer did not count for much, as it had scarcely afforded him time to become acquainted with nautical theory and practice.

The Captain, though recognizable by his strong family likeness to our friend Calverley, was very different in appearance from his brother. He was much more robust and mature, with a tanned, good-natured face, that spoke more of the open air and sunshine than of the study and the desk. He wore a short crisp curly brown beard, and the uniform of the Royal Mersey Yacht Club. He grasped Harry very heartily by the hand, and his own brother also, whom he had not seen for five months.

The first thing that struck Harry was the exquisite order and cleanliness that reigned everywhere in the beautiful little craft. The Captain, who could not endure anything like negligence or contempt of discipline, had an eye like a lady's for cleanliness and its opposite, and everything about the *Alaria* was kept in simple per-

fection. The sailors were as neat as the owner himself, but of course dressed suitably to their position, with pea-jackets of strong blue cloth, white trousers and shirts, with rolling collars. They had oilskin-covered straw hats of the true nautical fashion, with a black riband on which the word "Alaria" was printed in gold letters. As for the vessel herself, she had no ornament except a narrow gilt line, and just at the bows a delicately carved and gilded representation of the plant from which she took her name. Everything was as snug as possible, the sails in their oilskin covers, the ropes coiled neatly in their places—in fact, there was such an expression of perfect repose about the little cutter that it was difficult to imagine her on the open sea to-morrow.

"I expected you a little earlier," said the Captain, "but did not send to meet you, as it seemed doubtful whether you would be able to catch the Liverpool express at Manchester."

"We only just managed it, and were so hungry that we dined in Liverpool, and we left our luggage at the hotel."

"I have to go to Liverpool myself this evening," the Captain observed, "to buy some provisions and things, so I will fetch your luggage at the same time. As you've dined we'll have tea instead of dinner." Then the Captain gave his orders and said, "It's no use going down into the cabin till tea is ready, and I dare say it will amuse this young gentleman to watch the craft on the river."

Here, indeed, he was quite right. Harry had never before felt so powerfully attracted by any scene as by this. The masts of innumerable ships were visible against the sky in the haze that came from the great seaport, and this haze was now filled with a rich golden light from the setting sun. At the instant of his disappearance a lighted

lamp was run up to the mast-head of the *Alaria*, and of every other yacht and vessel in the neighbourhood as far as the eye could reach. Then the haze about Liverpool turned from gold to russet, and from russet to a rich crimson, and the stars began to be visible in the clear sky above. All over the broad mysterious water, from the dim rich city miles away to the nearest of the little group of yachts, began to glimmer trailing lines of fire from the lamps of the vessels, whilst the passing steamers displayed a green light on their starboard side and a red light on their port side, which added to the brilliance of the scene.

Harry was so absorbed by this glorious spectacle, to him so strange and new, that he entirely ceased to perceive what was going on immediately around him. The two Calverleys had a conversation together about matters which interested them, and of this Harry did not hear a word ; at last he felt a strong hand on his shoulder, and heard the Captain's strong good-humoured voice close to his ear.

"Well, young gentleman, you seem to be very much absorbed by the beauties of the Mersey, for you do not hear that tea is announced."

On this Harry went down into the cabin, closely followed by Minimus, who in this new state of existence felt that his only safety was his young master's presence. The dog's first attempt at getting down the steep little staircase into the cabin was not very successful, for he missed his footing and rolled down to the bottom ; however, he got into the cabin at last, not much the worse for his tumble, and there he felt more at his ease than he had done during the whole of that strange adventurous day, for the cabin looked like a room, though not so large as the rooms at Bilsbury Grange.

It was one of the prettiest little interiors that could be

imagined. The walls were covered with panels of dark polished walnut-wood, and in each panel was either a mirror, in a carved walnut frame, or a little picture in a gilt one. The pictures greatly relieved the rather serious and sombre aspect of the cabin, which would have looked gloomy, though rich, without them. They were all marine subjects, and included many of the varieties of the sea's ever-varying aspects, with the different kinds of shipping that are usually met with in European waters. Being on a small scale they were all exquisitely finished; and their frames, instead of projecting as picture-frames do on the walls of an ordinary room, were sunk or recessed rather deeply in the wood work of the cabin, which added immensely to their effect, and almost produced the illusion that they were so many little windows, looking out upon the sea itself. The mirrors were also recessed in the panelling, and reflected the light of a beautiful silver lamp which hung from the ceiling quite steadily now as the boat lay motionless on the water, yet which was specially contrived to swing freely with the motion of the waves. Two very comfortable sofas went on the sides of the little cabin; and there was a table between them now, covered with a very white tablecloth, and an elegant tea-service, on every article of which was engraved or painted the ancient crest of the Calverleys, with the word "Alaria," the whole encircled by leaves of the same plant which was gilded on the yacht's bows.

Harry had not been ten minutes in this pretty little snugger before he felt singularly at home there, and he experienced what is in fact one of the greatest charms of yachting, namely, the sensation of being at home and travelling at the same time. The yachtsman has only to go on deck to see new scenes, and he has only to descend



into his cabin to be entirely surrounded by the familiar objects of a home.

Talking of their intended voyage, the Captain said they would set sail early next morning, as the tide was favourable an hour before sunrise, and that after leaving the Mersey they would steer northwards, keeping between the Isle of Man and the coast of Cumberland, and then between the Mull of Galloway and Ireland along the Irish Channel, leaving the Mull of Cantire on the starboard quarter, and either rounding Isla on the west, or going through the Sound of Isla or the Sound of Jura, according to circumstances, to Oban. After that nothing was positively decided, except that the voyage was to be a free cruise amongst the western isles ; and they were to take advantage of wind and tide when favourable, and rest in port when they had nothing better to do.

Tea being over, the Captain, taking two sailors with him, went immediately to Liverpool, but by the time he returned our hero was fast asleep in his berth. Harry had a tiny little cabin all to himself and Minimus ; but there were two beds in it, one over the other, on shelves, the lower one being unoccupied. There was not much room to turn in these beds, and the cabin itself was on the most diminutive scale, but Harry found himself much better lodged than he had ever expected to be, from the model ; and indeed on board the *Alaria* the economy of space was so intelligently managed that there was room for everybody and everything, though the little vessel was only forty-six feet long with ten feet beam.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE SEA ! THE SEA !

HARRY generally had the gift of sleeping pretty soundly, and he gave ample evidence of it on the present occasion.

When he awoke, the narrow skylight of thick glass in the deck over his cabin shed such a strong light into the little place, that although it was much too opaque for sunshine to get through it without being dulled and deadened in its passage, it was evident to the inmate of the cabin that it was already broad daylight. No sooner was he sufficiently awake to remember where he was, and to look about him and see the fresh white panelling of his tiny dormitory, than he became aware at the same time of one very essential point of difference between it and all bedrooms or dormitories to which he had hitherto been accustomed. The whole place was in motion ; it rose and fell with considerable regularity, but it preserved during the whole time a certain fixed inclination of the floor, which sloped very steeply from the bed to the opposite wall of the cabin ; so that the sleeper would certainly have rolled out, if there had not been a wooden board to prevent him.

“We must be at sea !” thought our hero, and then he

heard the dash and splash of a wave against the vessel's side, which proved his conjecture to be right. He then felt extremely eager to get up and go upon deck, so that he might have a view of the sea that surrounded him ; but, on quitting his little bed, he found it almost impossible to stand upright. Having, however, at length partially accustomed himself to the inclination of the floor, and the continued movement of the boat, as she rose and fell upon the waves, he contrived to dress himself, and had filled the washing apparatus with water (a great white basin fixed in the corner, with a tap above it, and a drain with a plug at the bottom)—he filled it full, as he was accustomed to do with his washing-basin at home, and was proceeding to his ablutions—when he suddenly heard a movement of feet on the deck above him, and words of command given in a loud voice.

“Ready about!”

Then came an answer that Harry could not distinctly catch, as it came from the fore part of the vessel, but he heard the Captain's voice again shouting—

“Helm's a-lee!”

Our hero's nautical education ought to have prepared him for what was coming, but it didn't. Mere theoretical information is seldom at hand just when you require it. Indeed, the first consequence of the word of command appeared to be rather tranquillizing than otherwise, for the floor of the cabin was rather steadier and more level ; but an instant afterwards it heeled over in exactly the opposite direction, and the water in the washing-basin was thrown over Harry and Minimus, who both fell against the beds, to their great astonishment, the poor dog being especially puzzled by this new disturbance, of which he did not properly appreciate the utility.

"That must be tacking!" said Harry to himself; "and next time I hear 'Ready about,' I shall prepare myself accordingly. But what am I to do for a dry pair of trousers? I wonder where my luggage is? It is to be hoped they did not forget to fetch it from the hotel at Liverpool!"

He got upon deck as fast as he could, and there, to his intense surprise, beheld Greenfield minor, lounging very comfortably on a rug!

They were already about fifteen miles from land, quite clear of the Mersey, and that was the Lancashire coast on the right, or starboard side—a faint, thin line of blue. It was evident, therefore, that Greenfield must have been on board some time, unless he had dropped out of the sky, which did not seem probable.

"Why, Greenfield, how long have *you* been here?"

"Ever since last night, old fellow!" By which he did not mean that he had been where they were now situated geographically, but simply on board the *Alaria*.

The explanation of the mystery was this. Calverley had told the Captain how they had met with Greenfield at the hotel, and the Captain, out of pure kindness to Harry, had thought that if he had a young companion, the voyage would be more agreeable for him. So he had gone to the hotel in person, and seen Greenfield's father and mother, using all his eloquence to persuade them that a yacht voyage would be much better for the young gentleman's health and pleasure than the proposed three weeks' sojourn in the Isle of Man. After a great deal of talk, he had finally succeeded, and had hurried off Greenfield at once, before his parents had time to change their mind on the matter. The young gentleman had come on board at

night, with all his belongings, at the same time with Harry's and Calverley's luggage.

Our hero had already anticipated a charming excursion, but he immediately perceived that the pleasure of it would be wonderfully enhanced by his young friend's society. The Captain had judged quite rightly in giving Harry a companion of his own standing. The little company in the yacht would now consist of four, who could live together very happily when on board, and sometimes separate into two pairs, when they happened to be on shore, or boating in bays or rivers.

The keen fresh air of the sea, with now and then a dash of cool spray in the face, did our landsmen a great deal of good, and they could not look without exhilaration on the vast expanse of lively water before them, whose waves were glittering and dancing in the sunshine. There was a steady westerly breeze, strong enough to drive the *Alaria* through the water at a fine pace, but she could still carry all her canvas without a single reef—gaff-topsail and all. Tight and flat were the sails set, and the canvas, being all quite new, was almost as white as the clouds that floated in the summer sky. The British flag fluttered gaily at the mast-head, its colour being a decided relief to the dazzling monotony of whiteness.

"Good-morning, Blount!" said the Captain; "you must be hungry by this time. Didn't like to disturb you, as you seemed to be enjoying your berth. Had a good night, I suppose? Glad to see Greenfield, eh? Thought you would be—didn't like to disturb you at night, but your friend is to have one of the berths in your cabin. Breakfast must be ready by this time."

Harry completed his toilet, with the help of his port-

manteau, and duly presented himself at the breakfast-table, notwithstanding the motion of the vessel, which was now considerable, as the waves seemed rather to increase than to diminish. There was a capital breakfast, with fried fish, including salmon-cutlets, mutton-chops, eggs, coffee, tea, and different kinds of bread and tea-cakes, and the young gentlemen were recommended by their elders to make the most of their opportunity, as the dinner-hour was late, and there would be no luncheon but bread and cheese and a bottle of bitter beer. Harry's appetite was a capital one on shore, but at sea it was already sharpened by the keen briny air, so he set to work in very good earnest, and the Calverleys smilingly admired him. Nevertheless, the motion of the lively Alaria began to produce novel and peculiar sensations in both of the two young sailors. At first, they struggled against them very successfully, and even thought them not altogether disagreeable; but after a while, the paleness of the cheek betrayed an inward suffering.

"Come, Blount," said the Captain, "do let me give you a little more coffee, and will you not take a slice of ham? Do you like fat? Shall I give you some fat?"

Harry might have endured the idea of lean, but this fatty suggestion was more than his imagination could put up with, so he immediately quitted the breakfast-table, shortly to be followed by his young companion, and, for several hours afterwards, the two were suffering those agonies which make the ocean so generally unpopular with travellers who have not the true nautical instinct. However, as Lord Nelson himself never got quit of this infirmity, but always had to pay his little tribute, every time he went to sea, after renewing his acquaintance with

*terra firma*, we may reasonably hope that neither Harry nor Greenfield will be incapacitated for maritime adventure by a weakness to which such a true son of Neptune was liable.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### TO THE ISLES OF THE WEST.

WHILST Greenfield and Blount were both in that state of misery which we have alluded to in the last chapter, the *Alaria* came within sight of the Isle of Man, and all on board who were well enough to observe anything amused themselves by recognizing the Manx hills, Snafield, Garrabaw, Penny Pot, and Barrule. Greenfield heard the Calverleys talk about these elevations, and so wretched was he from sea-sickness that he would willingly have abandoned the *Alaria* and all her promised pleasures to set foot on that firm island where his father and mother were now probably resting after their little trip in the steamer from Liverpool. Short was *their* voyage and soon over, but who could tell how long the *Alaria* might tack about in this Irish Sea, of which Greenfield had quite enough by this time?

He even went so far as to beg Calverley to intercede for him with the Captain, and let him be put ashore at Douglas to rejoin his beloved parents; such is the degree of weakness to which sea-sickness can reduce its victims. They will even endure ridicule, which all men dread so much, rather than the prolonged agony of the heaving sea.

“It’s not of the least use asking my brother anything of



the kind," answered Calverley, "don't you see he's examining those vessels with his glass? One of them is a yacht, and she is sailing exactly in the same direction as ourselves. She is carrying fully as much canvas as she can well bear, and so are we. The two yachts are gradually approaching each other and it is already a race. Now you can no more persuade my brother to stop in a race till he has either won or lost it, than you can stop the rising tide."

The other yacht was a cutter also, and as the vessels approached they came within convenient distance for signalling. Then the *Alaria* ran up a bordered Union Jack and a blue pendant with white ball under it, requesting the other yacht to show numbers. The two vessels then signalled their clubs and names to each other, and it turned out that the rival yacht belonged to the "Royal Yacht Club," came from Cowes, and was called the "Raincloud." In about twenty minutes the yachts came so near each other that the speaking trumpet could be used, and then a brief conversation took place.

*Alaria.* We are bound for Oban ;—and you ?

*Raincloud.* Skye.

*Alaria.* Race you as far as Oban.

*Raincloud.* All right, what stakes ?

*Alaria.* Box of cigars.

*Raincloud.* Very well, mind they are good ones. We don't smoke inferior tobacco.

*Alaria.* Good or bad you will never smoke them ; so their quality is of no importance to you !

The vessels now separated again so as to have plenty of space for their evolutions, and however animated the life on board the *Alaria* may have been since she left Liverpool, it now became very much more so. Our two wretched victims of sea-sickness were put safely out of the way in

their own private cabin, for it was not thought prudent to allow them to remain on deck, as they were too ill to take proper care of themselves, and other people were now too busy to attend to them. All hands were wanted at their posts, the captain himself took the helm, and gave his commands with that thorough decision and knowledge of what ought to be done which always mark the accomplished seaman. Though only an amateur, he had a fine natural gift for handling a vessel, and had assiduously cultivated it for years, studying the art both scientifically and practically at the same time. Every man on board the *Alaria* had a quite absolute confidence in him, every man knew that what he commanded was sure to be the right thing at the right moment, and the discipline on board that yacht was perfect. The captain respected himself and made every one else respect him. He never lost his temper under any circumstances, however trying, and an oath never passed his lips.

Although the *Alaria* was a new yacht, William Calverley was not new to the art of yachting. He had begun, as a boy, with a tiny little craft eight feet long, which he had rigged exactly as a cutter; the sails were like pocket-handkerchiefs, the shrouds and halyards like common string, and the spars like walking-sticks, but the tiny craft, from the instantaneous quickness with which she answered every gust of wind, had taught her young owner the great lesson of rapidity. At the age of twenty he had possessed a five-ton boat which seemed to him a very big ship by contrast. She was twenty-six feet long and decked from end to end, with a cockpit to allow the captain to keep out of the way of her boom, and a little cabin with a couple of berths for the captain and his one sailor. In this five-tonner the owner had gone through a long apprenticeship and

gained most valuable experience, steering her generally himself and making voyages of considerable extent along the western coasts, during which he became intimately acquainted with every bay, creek, current, and harbour. At the age of twenty-three he had purchased a yacht of fifteen tons, second-hand, and had sailed her for five seasons, all round the British Islands and in the Baltic. He then designed a new yacht for himself, of twenty-five tons, which was the *Alaria*, and he intended to go no farther in the way of tonnage, but to do all in his power to become a first-rate cutter captain.

"Some men," he said, "have no limit to their ambition in tonnage, but as for me I am satisfied with playing the violin and do not aspire to a violoncello or a double-bass."

He looked upon his yacht as an instrument, and endeavoured to become an excellent performer. His crew had been formed with the greatest care, and all the men stuck to him with feelings of the strongest attachment, all except two who were new hands and of whom we may hear more in the sequel.

To return to the two cutters which had now started on their long race to Oban. The wind was increasing and blew steadily from the north-west, but the water was not rough (though probably the two sea-sick passengers thought it so), as the large mass of the Isle of Man served for an effectual breakwater. They were now within four miles of the island, and were leaving on the port quarter the rather majestic range of hills of which the loftiest is Snafield, from whence may be seen on a clear day one of the most remarkable panoramas in Europe, including the southern hills of Scotland, the western mountains of England with those of North Wales, and the Morne hills of Ireland. It was now easy to distinguish with a glass the smallest

details on the coast, down to the bathing machines in Ramsay Bay, and all the small craft in the good anchoring ground that lies between Ramsay and Manghold Head. Calverley took note that there were more fishing vessels than usual in that refuge, and at once inferred that it was probably blowing hard in the Irish Channel. This inference became confirmed as the vessels rounded the Point of Ayre (the north-eastern angle of the island), for now the wind, which had been north-west, came first one point nearer to west and soon afterwards two points, where it remained, that is to say at west-north-west, or in other words dead in the teeth of our yachtsmen, between the point of Ayre and the Mull of Galloway.

Being now clear of the island, it was unwise, if not impossible, to carry on under such a pressure of canvas, so the Captain determined to make all snug, in anticipation of a wild night, and the sooner it was done the better, as it was already 5.30 p.m., and there were dark clouds to windward, lying low on the waters of the Irish Channel, which looked like ink flecked with white, as far as the eye could reach.

It was a pity Blount and Greenfield were not on deck, to witness the beautiful manœuvre that followed. At a word from the Captain, all the men who had been sitting quietly on the windward side of the deck, sprang to their work, with the agility of monkeys, but without any of their chattering. One of them ran aloft, to cast off the lacing of the topsail, others seized the halyard, and other ropes, with whose names it is unnecessary to perplex the unlearned reader, and, whilst the Captain eased the vessel with the helm, the topsail was brought down on deck. Then the *Alaria* was hove-to with her nose to the wind, the jib was taken in, and clasped in the strong arms of

one of the sailors as soon as it was blown loose in the direction of the mainmast, and the bowsprit partly taken in. The gaff was lowered two reefs, and the mainsail reefed to that extent; one reef of the foresail was taken in, and the topmast lowered. Then a small jib was set on the now shortened bowsprit, and the *Alaria* got on her way again, going now more easily and lightly, though the seas were considerably higher than they had hitherto been.

Very likely the gentlemen on board the *Raincloud* were disposed to a feeling of contempt for the captain of the *Alaria*, on account of the prudence he manifested on this occasion, which they may have attributed to a want of spirit. The *Raincloud*, indeed, held on very boldly, staggering under all her canvas, with the topmast bending, and the deck at an alarming angle of inclination, and, for the present, she visibly gained upon her rival, but this did not trouble our captain much. He knew that the *Raincloud* would have to take in sail a little later, but probably without the advantage of daylight, and in a rougher sea. There was no reason to expect a storm, but rather a wild night might fairly be anticipated. The sky, at and after sunset, was yellow in the west; after sunset, indeed, it assumed a most intense yellow, with hard-edged lead-coloured clouds, and overhead there were a few mares' tails, the usual precursors of wind; the barometer was also falling.

Harry came on deck just at this time, feeling rather better, and much interested in the wild-looking scene around him. It is very impressive to look out upon a dark tumultuous sea, just at the hour when the gloom is quickly closing over it, and to know and feel that you are to remain out upon it through all the darkness and peril

of the night. No vessel was near the *Alaria* but the Raincloud, and the rival yacht was now nearly two miles away on the starboard-bow. In the distance were several merchantmen, and the smoke of a steamer (arriving in St. George's Channel, from the United States of America) was just distinguishable from the clouds on the remote western horizon.

The fresh air did Harry good, and he felt his appetite again rather keenly, which was a favourable symptom. The incident of the race had retarded dinner beyond the usual hour, and when it was served, in the main cabin, Harry presented himself at table. Notwithstanding a certain feeling of heat and tightness about the head, he was now able to endure the pitching and rolling of the *Alaria*, and ate a sufficient dinner, which he digested properly afterwards. Greenfield was not so fortunate, but passed a miserable night, suffering agonies that I leave to the reader's imagination, which in some instances will, no doubt, be aided by the remembrance of similar experiences.

The pleasures of yachting, with which Harry was now rapidly making acquaintance, differ very considerably from the ideal which he had formed of them from imagination, and the small model which he had studied in his leisure hours at Brambleby. He had not taken into account the rough and uncomfortable side of this elegant and gentlemanly amusement. He had not foreseen the fatigue produced by the constant rising and falling upon the waves the swilling of sea-water over the deck, drenching everybody to the skin, and the simple choice between a wet deck at night, and a cabin in which it was impossible to get rest for the eyes or brain, on account of the perpetual heaving of the floor and leaning of the walls in every

night, with all his belongings, at the same time with Harry's and Calverley's luggage.

Our hero had already anticipated a charming excursion, but he immediately perceived that the pleasure of it would be wonderfully enhanced by his young friend's society. The Captain had judged quite rightly in giving Harry a companion of his own standing. The little company in the yacht would now consist of four, who could live together very happily when on board, and sometimes separate into two pairs, when they happened to be on shore, or boating in bays or rivers.

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"Good-morning, Blount!" said the Captain; "you must be hungry by this time. Didn't like to disturb you, as you seemed to be enjoying your berth. Had a good night, I suppose? Glad to see Greenfield, eh? Thought you would be—didn't like to disturb you at night, but your friend is to have one of the berths in your cabin. Breakfast must be ready by this time."

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manteau, and duly presented himself at the breakfast-table, notwithstanding the motion of the vessel, which was now considerable, as the waves seemed rather to increase than to diminish. There was a capital breakfast, with fried fish, including salmon-cutlets, mutton-chops, eggs, coffee, tea, and different kinds of bread and tea-cakes, and the young gentlemen were recommended by their elders to make the most of their opportunity, as the dinner-hour was late, and there would be no luncheon but bread and cheese and a bottle of bitter beer. Harry's appetite was a capital one on shore, but at sea it was already sharpened by the keen briny air, so he set to work in very good earnest, and the Calverleys smilingly admired him. Nevertheless, the motion of the lively *Alaria* began to produce novel and peculiar sensations in both of the two young sailors. At first, they struggled against them very successfully, and even thought them not altogether disagreeable; but after a while, the paleness of the cheek betrayed an inward suffering.

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cabin and take a glass of grog with me, or a cup of tea if you prefer it, and then you will be more comfortable during the time you will have to spend on deck." As they were taking their grog in the cabin the Captain went on with his explanation.

"As I am not a very rich man, Blount, I take my own full share in the work on board, and do without a sailing-master; and this suits my taste, too, for I would not do otherwise with the wealth of a Bradford millionaire. I have a small crew of four able seamen, my own servant, who acts as steward, and a boy. When my brother is on board he acts as mate, and does his work very efficiently. He told you in joke that you were to be a midshipman; now, although there are no midshipmen on board yachts, you will have a position something like theirs—that is to say you will be a sort of junior officer, and the men will consider you so. This will be much more amusing for you, and it may be of use in after-life, as if you take to yachting you may have a yacht of your own some day. But the work for the present is mere learning and observing what is done. So, to begin with, you shall take your watch like the sailors, as my brother and I do. I command what is called the starboard watch, and half the crew belong to me specially for this, and watch with me; the other half being the larboard watch, commanded by my brother; and Greenfield, when he is well enough, will belong to that. Your watch, remember, is the starboard watch, and it is we who take the first turn, so now put your topcoat on, and come on deck. We shall have four hours of it, you know."

No one was now on deck who did not belong to the starboard watch. The Captain himself took the tiller, and told Harry to remain near him on the quarter-deck.

William Calverley, though not talkative on any other

subject, was simply inexhaustible on sailing. He was, besides, so capable of making things at once both clear and interesting to his hearer, that Harry found the time pass very agreeably as he listened. "Stop me when you don't understand any of my nautical expressions," said the Captain, "for you must learn the sea language, you know; it is indispensable, as every detail on board has its appropriate name, and so has everything that is done. Can you box the compass, by-the-by?"

Our hero had studied this important little accomplishment at Brambleby, and succeeded in acquiring it very perfectly. So at it he went, and got round the compass very quickly without a mistake. The Captain was encouraged to go on, and began a regular examination in all the parts of the yacht, from the topmast to the keel, which Harry passed very creditably, owing to his training on the model. The Captain liked accuracy in the use of sea-terms, and could not endure a blunderer.

All this time the *Alaria* was beating steadily to windward; but towards the close of the watch the sky was so overcast that not a single star was visible, and the night became so dark, for there was no moon, that not an object was to be seen around, except the lanterns of a few vessels at a distance, one of which was probably the rival yacht, the *Raincloud*. The black water rose now in waves of greater elevation, and the foam on their crests looked ghastly enough by the light of the *Alaria's* lantern. Most of them passed by, however, without occasioning any inconvenience, and Harry soon got accustomed to their sinister and menacing aspect; yet, occasionally, as if to remind the voyagers of the dread powers of the sea, there came a few gallons of salt water on the deck, swilling it from stem to stern.

Steering in the dark is always rather a ticklish business, as the helmsman misses the indications of temporary changes of wind, which in the day time are visible on the surface of the water, even at a distance of three or four miles. The Captain of the *Alaria* was too prudent and experienced a navigator, not to consult safety under these circumstances, and that was the reason for his great reduction of sail on the approach of night. All being now very safe and snug, he had nothing to do but eat into the wind as closely as he could : but about the third hour of the watch he began to look first at the compass, and then at the sail, with more than usual interest, and at length he said aloud to his young companion—

“ The wind has changed two points in our favour during the last quarter of an hour, and I think it will either hold where it is now, which would be enough in itself to make a difference, or else it will become more favourable still. In that case our sail to Oban might be rather pleasanter than I anticipated an hour since, for beating to windward during several successive days is tiresome even to a man who is as mad about sailing as I am, and without the true enthusiasm it is almost unendurable.”

The wind, as the Captain had thought probable, gradually veered to the west and then to west-south-west. Consequently it was a good side wind, on the port beam from the position they then occupied on the map right into the Irish Channel ; and when Harry went down to his berth, at the close of his four hours' watch, he was not likely to be disturbed by the operation of tacking. As for poor Greenfield he, of course, was excused from even the appearance of duty, and supposed to be in hospital. He was no longer actively sick, but lay in his berth in a state of great prostration, flat on his back with his eyes shut and

lips firmly compressed together. Harry was alarmed at first, and thought he looked as if he were dead, but Greenfield uttered three or four words. "I'm better so, but I can't talk, so good-night, Blount." After that not a syllable passed his lips during the whole night.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE ALARIA ARRIVES AT OBAN.

As Harry's watch had begun at eight in the evening, it was just midnight when it came to an end, and the bell was struck eight times, signifying that the eight half-hours of the watch were finished. Then the other (or larboard watch) was called in a loud voice by one of the sailors, "All the larboard watch ahoy !" and the men tumbled quickly out of their berths and were on deck in no time with our friend Calverley at their head. He took the tiller in the murky midnight hour, when he could not see a yard a-head, just as coolly as he would have done on a fine sunny sea ; and during his watch, as the wind was now sufficiently favourable to dispense with tacking, the *Alaria* made about thirty-six miles to the north-west, which brought her into the Irish Channel, between Port Patrick and Belfast Lough. Here they were at four o'clock in the morning, by which time it was eight bells again, and Harry, who was so fast asleep that he neither heard the bells nor the call, was rather roughly shaken out of his dreams by the steward, who informed him that the Captain expected him on deck.

Our hero, even in his school experiences at Brambleby, had never been disturbed so early, after so short a night.

To go to bed at twelve, and be made to get up at four o'clock precisely, is a degree of exactness which would have been thought a hardship at Dr. Templeman's. However our young sailor was determined to act his part in a becoming manner, so he bounced out of his narrow crib, dashed some cold water on his face and chest, and was very soon on the quarter-deck.

"Sorry to see you rather late, Mr. Blount," said the Captain in a tone of some severity. "You are the last of the watch on deck. I have been at the tiller for three minutes at least. Hope this will not occur again."

Was it fun or earnest? Harry could hardly make it out, but at last he began to think it must be earnest.

At any rate he determined to treat the Captain properly as his commanding officer, and to submit to the excellent discipline which reigned on board the *Alaria*.

One thing was now very much in Harry's favour. He no longer felt in the least troubled by sea-sickness. There was an end of *that* annoyance, and he never felt anything more of it during all the rest of his voyage. And now it was truly a pleasure to be on deck. The early sun was contending with the clouds over the lowlands of Scotland, which were distinctly visible on the starboard beam (or right-hand side of the vessel). Ireland was just visible on the opposite side of the Channel, whilst the mountains of Arran, and the crag of Ailsa, might be distinguished to the northwards. Although it was a summer morning the air was keen and bracing, and Harry began to think that breakfast would be very welcome. As if guessing the direction of his thoughts, the Captain said :

"You see this watch finishes just nicely at breakfast-time, for eight bells will correspond, for once, with eight o'clock." Harry now began to understand why they had

such substantial and abundant breakfasts on board the *Alaria*, but the interval seemed a long one, and as the bell was struck, first one, then (half-an-hour afterwards) two, and so on, adding one stroke every half-hour till eight, he noted the additions with satisfaction and became so far nautical that he began to reckon time by bells, as sailors do. He found out that both food and sleep, if to be had at all, must be got during the watch below, but so far from feeling less happy under this discipline he soon discovered that it added immensely to the interest of his life on board, by giving a value to time, and adding a zest both to rest and food, which they would never have had if accessible at every instant of the twenty-four hours.

The *Alaria* was nearer by three or four miles to the coast of Scotland than to that of Ireland. The Captain left the tiller to one of the sailors, and began to explore the channel with his telescope to see if he could find the Raincloud.

"There she is," he said at last, "close to the Irish coast and a little in advance of us. We may put on more canvas now, as it is daylight." He then gave the words of command, which were obeyed with the usual alacrity, and in a minute or two the mainsail and foresail were unreefed, the bowsprit pushed out to its full length and a large jib substituted for the small one, the topmast raised and fidded, and the gaff-topsail set. Under this great increase of canvas the *Alaria* sped through the water much more rapidly, as a horse trots faster when a harder driver takes the reins. She inclined so much that her lee bulwarks were occasionally under water, and shot a-head in fine style, so that the county of Wigton was left behind, and grew paler and paler, whilst the Mull of Cantyre loomed larger as the *Alaria* approached it. By the time they reached

this dangerous extremity of Argyleshire (so well known to all sailors who enter the Irish Sea from the North Atlantic) it was eight bells and time for breakfast, but the Captain postponed that meal for fully three-quarters of an hour in order to round the Mull himself. He took the *Alaria* so near to the rocks that Harry could see the waves breaking upon them on the starboard bow, and the sea-gulls came screaming about the boat as if to warn the bold navigators of their danger. By getting in this way the inside of the curve, the *Alaria* had an advantage over the *Raincloud*, which was still near the Irish coast, and although an hour or two previously the latter was a-head, or would have been had the vessel sailed round the coast of Ireland, she had now nothing to do but follow the *Alaria* in the broad channel between Isla and the Mull of Cantyre, which leads into the narrowing Sound of Jura.

The race now became really interesting, as the yachts were near enough to each other for their movements to be mutually visible, and the Calverleys maintained a running criticism on their adversary's seamanship which Harry was able but partially to understand. After breakfast he fell fast asleep on one of the sofas in the main cabin, nor did he wake until noon, when his watch was called on deck. Then he found the yacht quite in the Sound of Jura, and witnessed the striking scenery of that remarkable island, whose gray mountains rise precipitously from the sea to a height of two thousand five hundred feet. The Captain, who had made a favourite study of geology, pointed out to Harry the strong markings of stratification in the quartz rocks here, which, it is probable, are more distinctly visible than anywhere else in Scotland, and Harry saw, with surprise, the white quartz glistening high up on the hill-sides, as if it had been crystals of ice and snow. At the same



time the mountains of Argyleshire were visible in the distance, and Harry felt a strange exhilaration on approaching them. Range behind range, distance behind distance, they were clothed in the loveliest tints, from a tender gray to beautiful purple and blue, whilst folds of silvery cloud nestled here and there amongst them, or rested upon their summits in the pure Highland air. As the evening approached, the shadows became broader, the colours deeper and more intense, and now the two yachts were racing side by side with a fair wind and every stitch of canvas they could carry, right for the little strait that lies between Scarba and Luìng.

"That cutter sails very fairly," said the Captain, "and if the navigation before us were as simple as it is just here, and the wind remained the same, I rather imagine that she might get to Oban before us. But there is a nice little intricate archipelago about the Sound of Luìng, formed of the Slate isles and islets, which I count upon to give me an opportunity. Unless their skipper or pilot knows the coast uncommonly well I shall get a-head of him there. What's your opinion, Brierley?"

This question was addressed to a sailor who had been with the Captain on all his voyages and who knew the west coast of Scotland pretty thoroughly.

"No doubt, sir," he answered, touching his hat, "you would beat that vessel, as you say, if the wind continued same as it is now, but this wind will fall at sunset, and we should have had a much better chance, and been in a pleasanter position if we had gone through the Sound of Islay with the tide, which runs like a river, and been on the other side the Isle of Jura, as then we should have been entirely clear of all these little islands that will be very troublesome in the dark. We should have had a

clear course between the Mare Islands and Mull, and have been able to profit by any light breath of wind that may spring up in the night. There won't be much wind anyhow."

"How long will this breeze last?" asked the Captain.

"Till sunset, sir, and then it will drop altogether."

"Brierley," the Captain said, "do you recollect us passing through the strait of Corryvreckan in my little five-tonner six years ago? It was just towards the end of the flow, and we got through very nicely, though it was wildish work. Now we are here at the right time for the tide, which flows through the strait from the eastward. The strength of it is almost spent now, but there is enough to carry us through with this breeze, which would be on our port beam. I've a good mind to try it. If we got through we should be in the open channel between Mull and the Mare Islands, and ready to profit by any light breeze on the next tack when we should have it quite fair, and then we might set the spinnaker, and trouble ourselves no more about rocks and islets till we got to Oban."

Brierley looked rather grave, and paused before he replied. At last he said, "If we didn't get through, sir, Corryvreckan would be an awful place to pass the night in. We should be caught on the current of the ebb, and never come out, most likely."

Harry Blount was listening to this, and asked what there was to be particularly afraid of there.

"The whirlpool of Corryvreckan, sir," Brierley answered, "the worst of all the whirlpools, I believe."

"Except the Maelstrom," the Captain added; "but the dangers of this passage are exaggerated in the popular belief, which is derived from the most dangerous states of the tide. It is said that the current runs sometimes twelve

miles an hour, and that vessels become utterly unmanageable in the innumerable eddies that fill the straits, but this is very rare, as they carefully avoid these straits altogether. I quite believe that a ship caught in these whirlpools would be impossible to steer, but she would not necessarily be lost. A foreign vessel once *did* get caught here at the very worst time of the tide, and after whirling about in a way that alarmed the sailors very much, was cast out of the gyrations on the eddy, and carried along quite safely by the Jura shore. Something of this kind is the worst that would be likely to happen to us, but with this breeze, and a yacht well in hand like the *Alaria*, I feel pretty sure that I could steer through without any serious danger, and if no one on board objects I shall try it. Any one who thinks the risk imprudent, and wishes to be put on shore, shall be landed at once, safely on the mainland."

Not one of the men accepted this offer, though all hands were on deck just then. And if anybody supposes that either Harry or Greenfield would refuse a risk that others accepted without a word, he scarcely yet understands the nature of an English boy. Far from wishing to be in a safer place, they were both eager for the attempt, and dreaded the possibility that the counsels of Prudence might even yet prevail.

There was not much time, however, for Prudence to meditate what she should advise. The straits of Corryvreckan were now on the port bow, and if the adventure were to be tried at all there was no time to postpone it. The Captain showed no sign of hesitation, but quietly put the helm to starboard, and ordered the men to haul in the mainsheet, haul aft the jib, and bowline the foresail. Then he eased the helm a little, and the *Alaria* shot off towards the straits of Corryvreckan, with the wind on her larboard

beam. Just then Harry overheard one of the men whispering to another, "It's a bottomless pit is that whirlpool: it goes down to the bowels of the earth."

The *Alaria* crossed the bows of the *Raincloud*, much to the surprise of the latter. All eyes were turned to the rival yacht, and as Calverley was looking at the *Raincloud*, he perceived a steamer several miles away in the Sound of Jura coming in the same direction. "Is that the Glasgow boat for Oban?" he asked.

"No, sir, she can't be that, for the Glasgow boat stops at Lochgilp, and the passengers cross in the Crinan canal to the Oban steamer. That vessel must be a steam-yacht."

Here the matter dropped, and nobody thought any more about the vessels in the Sound of Jura, as there was other work before the *Alaria*. The breeze was still quite powerful enough to maintain a high degree of speed, and as the tide was still flowing in the same direction the yacht soon entered the dreaded passage between the conical mountain of Scarba, which springs suddenly out of the sea to a height of fifteen hundred feet, and the desolate, rocky, northern extremity of Jura. All hands were at their places just as if holding themselves in readiness to 'bout ship, and not a word was spoken. It soon became evident to Harry that the water was behaving itself very differently from the usual habit of sea-water. It was not particularly rough, the waves were not nearly so high as they had been in the Irish Sea, but they had not the same frank honest way of meeting the vessel. They twisted themselves about, often meeting and leaping vertically in glittering spray; and different swirls and eddies played on both sides the *Alaria*, and seemed to accompany her on her way. Evidently the yacht was by no means easy to steer in all

this confusion and disturbance ; she often yawed wildly from side to side, and her head was turned suddenly from starboard to port, or the contrary, just as a horse's head would be turned if some one violently seized the bridle. One half the *Alaria's* length would often be in water that flowed in quite a different direction from that which bore the other half, and this produced sudden wrenchings of the rudder, which nothing but a strong arm and instant decision could have met with sufficient energy and promptitude. Short angry seas leaped suddenly over the bulwarks upon the deck, and it was impossible to anticipate from what quarter they would come. The yacht seemed to be surrounded by a babbling crowd of enemies, in the utmost confusion amongst themselves, yet all alike in the hostility of their intentions.

Meanwhile Harry was looking out for *the* whirlpool, which his imagination depicted as something like the crater of a volcano with walls of dark water instead of rock. He had read Poe's story of the man in the *Maelstrom*, and had seen water poured into a funnel, so by imagining the funnel big enough, with the additional horrors that Poe so cleverly depicted, he had a very terrible picture of a whirlpool in his mind's eye, with a certain vessel (the *Alaria*) going round and round the dizzy smooth slope inside the hollow cone, at a fearful and ever accelerating pace, down to the dreadful vortex. This, of course, is the proper imaginative conception of a whirlpool, and I deeply regret that the principle upon which this book is written does not permit me to adopt it, and harrow the reader's feelings in the most effectual fashion. Wouldn't I make him shudder ! But what is an author to do, when he has adopted the realistic principle of describing things as they are ?

*Consolons-nous !* there is something in dull reality also. Corryvreckan, if not exactly like Poe's Maelstrom, is an awkward place to pass, and the reader may have a very clear idea of it, and of the courage which the Captain needed, and possessed, if he will go to the next stony rivulet in a flood, when all the little rocks are submerged under a swift current, and the surface is in swirls and eddies. Now let him increase the scale of the whole thing, till, instead of a rivulet, he has a strait with a rushing tide in it, bound and hemmed by rocky mountainous shores, and instead of the rocks in the rivulet great crags under the sea, one of which is about as big as the crag of Ailsa, though the top of it only comes up to within fifteen fathoms of the surface ; let him fancy the ocean going over such a rough path as this, and making, not one fabulous whirlpool, but a thousand smaller ones, with all manner of contradictory streams within streams, and currents within currents, elbowing each other as it were out of the way, and twisting and clashing in a manner enough to bewilder the coolest brain that ever ruled a vessel—let the reader imagine this, and he has, not the fable, but the reality of Corryvreckan !

They got on well enough till they were nearly through the strait—thanks to the masterly steering of William Calverley ; but at length the bows of the *Alaria* were caught in a whirl that she was unable to contend against, and her head ran up into the wind whilst her stern wheeled round in the opposite direction. Seeing that it was useless to resist, the Captain gave the command to 'bout ship, and round they went over the whirl as neatly as if the movement had been voluntary on their part. An unskilful or ignorant steersman would have lost his head under such circumstances, but the Captain said, " Don't be afraid, it's perfectly right, we shall be carried out on the eddy ;" and

so it proved, for he handled the yacht so neatly that she wore round into something like her former position, and was swiftly borne away towards the Isle of Mull. The water now became quieter and the vessel much easier to steer, but every heart on board had beaten fast with excitement and anxiety, and it took some time to settle into their former tranquillity. The expression of firmness on the Captain's weather-beaten face now relaxed into a smile, and his whole body, which had seemed rigid as that of a soldier under arms, now fell into an easier and more negligent attitude.

Corryvreckan was now left behind on the port quarter, and the *Alaria* was approaching the middle of the wide, safe channel between Scarba and Mull. Dinner was served in the cabin, and the recent anxiety which all had felt (but none confessed) gave place by a natural reaction to more than common cheerfulness and gaiety. The wind fell as Brierley had predicted, so that the little table in the cabin could be arranged comfortably and elegantly, and the little party dined as well as if they had been on shore. This dinner was renovation itself to Greenfield, for it was the first meal he had fairly eaten since his departure from Liverpool; indeed, he felt so well now, and so confident in himself, that when dinner was over he positively accepted a small cigar, and went on deck to smoke it!

Everybody was on deck that evening, for the scene was so beautiful that it would not permit of going below. Harry had never beheld anything like it. The golden orb sank apparently in the ocean itself, that wide Atlantic Ocean, which was now visible in its grandeur from the quarter-deck of the *Alaria*. Imagination has a great deal to do with it, no doubt, but it is impossible to feel, in looking at a sunset in the Irish Sea, or in the Mediter-

ranean, those sensations of sublimity which affect us, when from the western coast of Scotland we see him descend into the true ocean, that ocean whose immensity the mind can never realize, and yet can deeply feel !

The *Alaria* was now put on another tack at right angles to the one she had been following since she parted from the *Raincloud*, and here both Greenfield and Harry had the benefit of a little lesson in navigation. One of the sailors drew in the log, and the Captain kindly explained the use of it. The log used on board the *Alaria* was Massey's Patent, and the boys were both greatly interested in the action of the copper fish behind, which, from the way all its fins are set (amongst them they make a screw like that which propels a screw steamer), turns round and round unceasingly whilst the vessel is in motion, and accurately registers the miles of water that she passes through on three dials, one for a hundred miles, one for ten, and one for a single nautical mile. "This log, you see," the captain continued, "is fastened to the stern of the vessel by a cord, which is paid out to a sufficient length for the log to be clear of the eddy caused by the rudder, and by the body of the vessel itself, and it registers quite accurately the quantity of water the ship passes through, but not quite accurately the space traversed upon the map, on account of tides and currents which would falsify all calculations if the necessary deductions were not made for them. By the log and the compass together we calculate what is called our dead reckoning on the chart; and if you will just come down into the cabin I will show you where we are now, and what we have to do next."

The cabin table was soon covered with the large chart of the west coast of Scotland, and as the wind was now so light that there was nothing but a mere ripple on the water



it was easy to study it at leisure. The silver lamp hung motionless from the ceiling, and cast a clear light on the wonderful sheet spread out below, by which the intelligent navigator knows more about the coasts he passes, and the islands amongst which he threads his way, and the tides and currents which may help or baffle him, than the inhabitants of those coasts and isles themselves, who have seen them all their lives. "Here is the exact spot where we wore ship just now," said the Captain, "and the tack we are now following, if we can keep to it, is in a straight line for the entrance to Oban Bay between Kerrera and the mainland, the direction of this line being north-east by east, and the steersman is following it already. The exact distance from the point where this tack began, to the entrance of Oban Bay, is fifteen nautical miles (you know there are about six nautical miles to seven English ones, as there are exactly sixty nautical miles to a degree, and rather more than sixty-nine English ones), but we are very likely to be becalmed long before we get there."

When Harry went on deck again with the starboard watch, the whole aspect of the sea had changed, and presented the most striking contrast with its appearance the night before, when they had been beating to windward against dark waves and under a gloomy sky after passing the Isle of Man. The breeze had died away, the last ripple had ceased to lift itself, and there was not motion enough on the water to swamp a tea-cup. To say that it was as calm as a lake would not necessarily convey an adequate idea of such calmness, for lakes are often anything but calm, so we must content ourselves with another equally hackneyed comparison, and say that it was like a mirror. But not every mirror can reflect so much natural beauty. The fine island of Mull, with all its purple mountains,

was reflected so perfectly that it seemed suspended in the air. To the south rose the quartz mountains of Jura, now faint and pale with distance, whilst closer at hand on the starboard beam was the little archipelago of the Slate and the Garveloch isles and islets, which lay on the water like a fleet of great dark ships at anchor. It is needless to observe that Harry Blount had never witnessed such a scene, for the reader knows the narrow limits of his experience. Both he and Greenfield were so impressed by the beauty of this spectacle that neither of them spoke a word for a long time. As for Greenfield, although, as it was now the starboard watch, he had a right to be in his berth below, he could not quit the deck, but remained there watching the deepening of the sky and hills as the long northern twilight gradually yielded to the night, and the stars grew brighter and brighter. Then, far to the north-east, there shone a star larger than any of the others, and golden like a little sun.

"That," said the Captain, "is the light on Lady's Island, a rock off the south-west extremity of Lismore. The place is famous in poetry. Maclean, of Duart, exposed his wife there to be drowned when the tide rose, as the rock is covered at high water, but she was rescued. As for her husband, the legend tells that he had a mock funeral of her with an empty coffin.

"O ! pale grew the cheek of that chieftain, I ween,  
When the shroud was unclosed, and no lady was seen ;  
When a voice from the kinsmen spoke louder in scorn—  
'Twas the youth who had loved the fair Ellen of Lorn.

"I dreamt of my lady, I dreamt of her grief,  
I dreamt that her lord was a barbarous chief :  
On a rock of the ocean fair Ellen did seem ;  
Glenara ! Glenara ! now read me my dream !"

That 'rock of the ocean' is where you see the light, and a very useful light it is, too, for it has probably saved

more lives than the most barbarous feudal chieftain ever destroyed."

The Alaria was now crowded with canvas, and everything was done to catch those lightest of zephyrs which almost imperceptibly stir the atmosphere in the midst of a glassy calm. Not only was the whole of her ordinary canvas displayed to the full, but she wore the largest sails of every description which she possessed, and in addition to the four with which Harry was already acquainted, a huge spinnaker was boomed out to larboard, spreading a vast area of light cotton canvas from the topmast head almost to the level of the deck. There was something almost unearthly in the appearance of the yacht, with all these white sheets spread in the dim starlight. Her motion was absolutely imperceptible, so that Greenfield's last remains of sea-sickness entirely left him, and he fully enjoyed the novelty and romance of his situation. But if the motion of the yacht was imperceptible in itself there was evidence that she was not standing still, and evidence of a very peculiar and beautiful kind. It was not the changes of the mountain outlines on the islands, for they were too remote, and by this time also too vague and dim to afford an indication, except to the most observant eye. It was not the changes of the stars, for they could only help to determine the course of the little vessel, and (not her speed, yet it was something quite as brilliant as they were, and very like them. As Harry and Greenfield leaned over the taffrail they saw diamond fire streaming away from the rudder in sudden flashes and sparkles, which lasted a second or two, and then were extinguished in the dark water, to be immediately succeeded by others, endlessly, endlessly.

"Those lights," said the Captain, "are what is

called the phosphorescence of the sea, and we happen to be just now in a very good region for observing it. The most probable explanation is that every one of those innumerable flashes is caused by some minute marine animal, as very many species are known to give off light under certain circumstances. Macculloch says that he found the sea here filled at one time with minute spirals for a depth of several fathoms, and a breadth of several miles, and a length which extended from the Mull of Cantyre to the Shetlands, which gave off light of this phosphorescent kind. I suppose we are now passing through a dense shoal of these creatures, or of others which have the same property of giving light when disturbed by any agitation in the water. Just imagine how many there must be of them! Anything that drags or trails in the water produces this light, and yet, however slowly we are going, it is evident that we must be continually disturbing new creatures, like a carriage forcing its way through a crowd. You've read the 'Ancient Mariner,' and you remember the water-snakes moving in the phosphorescent sea—

“ ‘Beyond the shadow of the ship  
I watched the water-snakes :  
They moved in tracks of shining white,  
And when they reared the elfish light  
Fell off in hoary flakes.’

It is just this elfish light that you see now, and the log that is out there astern, and follows us so regularly, has its own wake of diamonds. If you were rowing now in a small boat, every dip of the oar would be luminous, and the water would drop from it like liquid fire. It is impossible on such a night as this, for any boat to approach a ship unseen.”

Brierley had foreseen very accurately what the state of the wind would be throughout the night. There was just enough air to keep the yacht moving, at the rate of about one knot per hour. The genuine yachtsman does not altogether dislike a night of rest like this, especially when he has a mind capable of enjoying the sublime spectacles of nature. He sits or reclines on the deck, well protected against the night-chill, and falls into a dreamy state as he smokes the pipe of peace. No situation in the world is so favourable to pleasant, half-melancholy *reverie* as the deck of a yacht on a calm, mild night in summer, provided only that there be no discordant companions, the worst of whom is the man who is always anxious to get to his destination, and looks upon sailing with scarcely disguised contempt, because it has not the reliable punctuality of a railway train. There was nothing of that impatient temper on board the *Alaria*. As for the Calverleys, they enjoyed yachting for its own sake, in all weathers, accepting the changes of wind as a relief from monotony, and a constant source of interest, which they are to all who truly love the sea. Harry would have liked to remain on deck all night, but he felt so sleepy at twelve that he was obliged to go to bed at the end of the first starboard watch. At four in the morning, when his second watch began, he came on deck, with great curiosity, to see how much way had been made, and found that a steady light breeze had just sprung up, which in consequence of the immense spread of canvas which they carried, was now taking them rapidly to Oban. The sun rose over the majestic mountains of the west Highlands, and illumined all the isles. Harry had never beheld the day dawn upon scenery so magnificent. He felt almost sorry that the morning's voyage was so soon to be at an end, but there was so

much curiosity on board about the Raincloud, which was nowhere to be seen, that all were anxious to get to Oban, and ascertain decidedly whether she had slipped in before them during the night.

"I cannot think how she managed it, if she did," said the Captain.

They passed by Gylen Castle, so close to the rocky, low shore of Kerrera that it might have been touched with a long pole, and shortly afterwards saw the beautiful and well-sheltered little bay of Oban spread out before them, with its clean, tidy-looking houses, its old castle of Dunolly, and the Maiden's Isle, making altogether the snuggest and prettiest port anywhere on the west of Scotland. For the present, however, our friends paid very little attention to the beauties of Oban, being entirely occupied with several yachts that lay at anchor in the bay; and one of these, I regret to have to add, was the Raincloud. She looked as if she had been there a month, all was so quiet and tidy. Her mainsail was in its cover, all halyards and shrouds well set up and taut, and the standing rigging as black as it could be, whilst the deck was white and clean, and all the brass-work as bright as burnished gold. Two or three sailors were lounging on deck, as if they had nothing whatever to do, and there was an accommodation-ladder over the side, which spoke of communication with the shore. The owner of the Raincloud was, perhaps, already in one of the hotels at Oban, quietly awaiting the arrival of the Alaria; or, perhaps, not thinking it a matter worth troubling himself about, had already started on some expedition into the interior.

No sooner had the Alaria chosen her moorings and cast anchor, than the Captain ordered the gig to be lowered, and sent his brother with the best box of cigars he had

on board to the owner of the victorious vessel. The gentleman in question received Calverley in his state cabin, and smiled when the cigar-box was set upon the table.

"My claims to victory," he said, "are small indeed, and it is I who owe Mr. Calverley a box of cigars—I hope he will find them good ones." Saying this, he opened a small cupboard in the panelling of the cabin, and politely handed a large box of very fine Havannas to the ambassador from the Alaria. "You wonder at this," he continued, "but the fact is, that when I saw you sailing from the whirlpool of Corryvreckan, I at once concluded that the race was over, and that you were bound on a desperate adventure, which only the Phantom ship itself could come out of alive. So, considering you as good as lost, I willingly accepted the kind offer of a steam-yacht that soon overtook me, and towed me, after the wind fell, here into Oban Bay. She is moored out there, on our port bow."

Calverley then retired, being conducted to the ladder by the owner of the Raincloud ; but when he handed the box of cigars to his brother, the Captain said—

"Smoke them if you will, John, I shan't touch them. It's a sell, after all, you know. Fancy a fellow letting himself be towed by a steamer, before a race is finished ! I would have threaded amongst those islets for a week before I would have let the best steamer that ever boiled water fling me a hawser ! Such a fellow as that doesn't deserve a yacht ; he's fit to sit in a railway-carriage, and be dragged by a locomotive. That's all *he's* good for !"

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### A REST IN PORT, AND A FRESH START.

It was not the Captain's notion of yachting to be always at sea, night and day, without visiting the regions which he passed ; and, besides the interest that he took in excursions upon the land, he fully appreciated, both for himself and crew, the benefits to be derived from a complete rest. He generally managed to be in some harbour from Saturday afternoon till Monday morning, at any rate, so that the Sunday might be a day of rest for the crew, and that they might have a good opportunity for going to church, though he did not exercise any pressure to compel them to do so, as the honesty of his own nature was repugnant to anything that savoured of false professions and hypocrisy.

It happened to be a Saturday morning when the *Alaria* reached Oban, so the Captain said he intended to remain there until Tuesday, thus giving three nights and three days of rest, at least so far as yachting was concerned. This was a very good thing for both Harry and Greenfield, but especially for Greenfield, who needed a little time to recover his strength after the fatigue of sea-sickness. There is a good deal of fatigue, too, occasioned by the mere motion of a vessel upon the waves, which makes a good haven generally very welcome for a day or two during a cruise,



and the rest is delicious in itself, however dull the place may be. And as for dull places, it may be doubtful whether there *are* any dull places for a man who possesses William Calverley's accomplishments or follows his pursuits. Certainly, he could land nowhere on the coast of Scotland without immediately finding something to interest him. Even if there were nothing but barren rocks he immediately began to take notes of their geology, and make drawings; the smallest and most insignificant plant interested him as a botanist; whilst any tumble-down old ruin, or picturesque fishing village, awakened either his antiquarian curiosity or his artistic feeling. Few men have ever been better fitted for the enjoyment of yachting in its highest and most thoroughly respectable sense. William Calverley presented a striking contrast to those yachtsmen (there are some such) whose only idea of pleasure is vulgar jollification. He kept up the discipline of his own mind as steadily as the discipline of his little ship, and maintained a healthy activity of its powers, which saved him from the weariness of apathy and ennui.

Harry will remember many things about his first yacht-voyage as long as he lives, but he will not remember anything more clearly than those three days of rest at Oban. And yet there was nothing very striking or remarkable about them. The *Alaria* lay at her moorings in the calm and beautiful bay, sleeping from dawn to sunset, as if there were no more seas to be encountered or dangerous straits to traverse. The two boys paddled about a good deal in a miniature boat belonging to the *Alaria* (not much bigger than a clothes-basket), amusing themselves by exploring the bay and the entrance to Loch Etive as far as the Connel Ferry, which stopped them, as the water happened to be rushing down it like a cascade. They were much

astonished by the extreme clearness of the water in those parts, and felt almost giddy when, looking over the gunwale of the boat, they could see the fishes swimming far below them; and the sandy bottom, with a star fish here and there slowly and awkwardly moving, or a crab crawling, or a conger eel lazily resting its big serpent-like body. Harry said he had never seen such a fine aquarium, and there is no doubt that the sea is a very fine aquarium indeed. In this way the two young friends made little exploratory voyages of their own, landing on the different islets within a short distance of Oban, and greatly enjoying their independence. The Monday following their arrival was dedicated to a geological excursion, which included the ascent of Ben Cruachan.

"Here, just about the bay of Oban," the Captain observed, "there are some upper yellow and red sandstones, and behind Oban, the country is greenstone and so on, but there is a granite region that begins about Bunawe, and includes the head of Loch Etive, so I want just to have a look at it, and if you like to come with me, I shall be glad of your company."

So they all set off in a carriage from Oban and ascended the great Ben Cruachan, by far the largest mountain which Harry had seen.

"When you are yachting," said the Captain, when they got to the top, "always make a point of ascending every important elevation within easy reach of the port where you happen to be staying; it is by far the readiest and easiest means of making yourself acquainted with the country, which lies spread out before you like a model. It would take a week of travelling to know this region as well as we shall know it after an hour's observation from this point with the telescope. Here we are on this pinnacle of

granite and porphyry, with Loch Etive on one side of us and Loch Awe on the other, one of them a remarkably fine example of a salt water loch, or fiord, and the other an equally fine example of the fresh-water lake, whilst all around us are the greatest mountains in the Highlands. There, to the west, we have the sea with its isles, and to the south the view stretches away even to the lowland plain. The top of Ben Cruachan is a wonderful place for studying the conformation of the country. Loch Etive is very interesting to geologists, because it supports a certain line of geological reasoning. It is argued that a valley like Loch Etive cannot possibly have been scooped out by the sea, and nature herself confirms this reasoning here, for there is a rocky barrier at Connal Ferry, which the sea has not yet cleared away, though the tide rushes over it violently, and yet higher up the loch the water is more than four hundred feet deep."

"How do you believe these valleys were made?" Greenfield asked.

"The most probable theory, in my opinion, is that they were gradually hollowed, in immense spaces of time, by the action of rainwater and ice, and that after the valleys sank below the level of the sea they were filled either with sea-water as Loch Etive is, if the sea end were open, or else with fresh water from their own streams as Loch Awe is, if the sea end were closed. You can see the work of water everywhere, in all those ravines on the mountain sides; the mountains are in fact *sculptured* by water. And as for glacier-ice there are evidences of its action within reach of my telescope; for instance, those pretty islands in Loch Awe are polished, where the rock lies bare, by the operation of glaciers, and the marks of their passage are distinctly traceable all along the lake-shores, whilst at the other end

of it the barrier that keeps it from the sea is all worn by glacier-ice that at some very remote period must have been slowly flowing southwards. There is evidence, too, that in those times the whole country must have been very much higher, so that the peak we are standing on must have been an alpine peak surrounded by perpetual snow, and there was certainly a great glacier in Loch Etive, flowing down to the sea ; and another in the valley of Loch Awe, just as the glaciers to-day flow down the ravines of Jan Mayen into the Arctic Sea. At that time what we now see as islands must have been part of the mainland, and what are now submarine mountains were islands. By a little exercise of imagination, with the help of what we can still see in arctic and alpine countries, we may picture to ourselves pretty accurately the Alpine Scotland of the past."

"Even now," Greenfield observed, "there is snow in the hollows of Ben Cruachan, though it is the beginning of July. Harry, let us go and fetch some !"

The two boys, like boys as they were, and having had enough for the present, perhaps, of the Captain's geological lecture, scrambled down a precipitous slope of the mountain, which descends into the corrie on the Loch Awe side. A rougher path it would be impossible to imagine. It was as steep as the worst of staircases, and every step was represented by a great rough granite boulder. At last they came to a patch of snow, about thirty yards long by ten broad, and the first thing they did (being boys, as I say) was to set to work making snowballs, and pelting each other till they were nearly blind. Thus they were able to say in after-times, when narrating the events of their voyage, that they had had a battle with snowballs in July, without going out of Great Britain, and very few boys can say as much. When evening approached, they

all took a good last look at the wonderful scene around them ; at Ben Lomond, Ben Nevis, and their big brethren ; at Loch Fyne, Loch Awe, and Loch Etive ; at many a fair isle and promontory. Then they set off on the homeward journey to Oban, and the boys raced each other from the very summit of Ben Cruachan, down to the road in the Pass of Brandir, where the carriage from Oban was waiting. When they were once in the carriage, and rolling away to the west, as the last rays of sunset reddened the peaks of Cruachan, Harry inquired where they were likely to be "to-morrow evening at this time."

"That depends entirely upon the state of the weather. If it is fine to-morrow morning, I shall take the south side of Mull, and go to Iona and Staffa, after which I should like very well to potter about the western coast of Mull for a day or two, in order to take some notes about the geology of that island, which is interesting for its variety. After that I should like to go to Skye, and then to the western isles, beginning with Barra, and going along the whole series, if we have time, up to Lewis. However, it is quite enough to settle what we will do for a couple of days in advance, as something is always sure to occur to mar elaborate projects ; and if at any time you and Greenfield want to go back to Yorkshire, we can easily land you at a steamboat station, from which you will go straight to Greenock, where you will take the train for the south."

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on the Atlantic which lifted the little boat gently up to the height of the broken columns that form the pathway inside the cave, and then let it fall again several feet lower on the restless green watery floor. The sunshine flickered all over the dark irregular columns and roof as from a mirror turned in the hand.

"Writers have often published very foolish descriptions of this place," said Calverley, "they speak of it as if it were as big as a cathedral and as regular as a Greek temple, but how easily we see that it is neither one nor the other. but simply a natural cave, and not a remarkably big one. Still it is the strangest and most impressive place I ever was in. How grim and awful the dark smooth columns look!"

"One sees at a glance," the Captain answered, "that it is not human work, for men would be more careful about regular measurements, but it is difficult to think of it as simply natural, like sandstone or limestone, for instance. The impression it produces on me is that of a rude attempt at architecture by the genii of oriental imagination. One may fancy them receiving orders to build a hall in the sea, and erecting this with its tremendously thick walls and roof, and its innumerable columns."

"Are basaltic columns generally about the same size?"

"No, they are of all sizes. Even here, at Staffa, you will find much smaller ones than these on the causeway, and in Ailsa they are nine feet thick, whilst in Morven they are sometimes not a single inch in thickness. Here, at Staffa, they seem to be about two feet thick, sometimes a yard. The highest column at Staffa does not measure sixty feet, whereas there are some in Skye that measure four hundred. There are plenty of basaltic columns at Ulva, and we shall see them this evening."

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for Iona itself, it presented nothing but a dark mass with an irregular outline, apparently floating on the motionless water, and in it you might dimly distinguish the old Gothic ruins of the cathedral and the chapel of St. Oransa, and the sculptured crosses and tombs where the saints and princes rest. During the whole night the twilight remained, as it does in northern latitudes in the long days, so that when the larboard watch began at midnight the light was like that of late evening in the south. A thin young moon, it is true, hung over the stony hills of Mull, but she contributed very little in the way of illumination, though much to the poetry of the scene. When this soft evening twilight became paler and paler, the thin moon became faint and hard to find, and lo! the delicate shadow of the northern night was already passing away, and it was dawn!

Of course, they went to Staffa, that wonderful isle of basalt columns, with the caves where the ocean thunders in tempest, or softly murmurs in the rare calm days of summer. It was so calm that our party could enter the caves in the boat whilst the Alaria tacked about to keep within reach. They spent several hours upon the island, not being called away in a hurry like the unfortunate visitors who come in the public steamboat, and the Captain, as usual, under such circumstances, talked geology a little in his own way, which consisted chiefly in answering Greenfield's questions. Not wishing to enclose too much of the physic of information in the sweetmeat of story, I am careful not to report the Captain's talk at length, but it was a good thing for the boys to have him with them, for his explanations added greatly to the interest of what they saw. Harry and Greenfield had never visited anything like Fingal's Cave. There was a smooth low swell

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After exploring Staffa very thoroughly, our friends returned to the *Alaria*, and set sail, with a fair light breeze, for the strait between Ulva and Mull, where they passed another night of delightful calm, as nearly as possible resembling the one they had already spent at Iona, but with the difference that the scenery here was much more noble and grand. The *Alaria* was anchored in a sheltered place, near the entrance of Loch na Keal, and from her deck was visible the magnificent range of the Ben More mountains on the opposite side of the loch, whilst a precipitous island raised its rugged front in the very middle of the water. When the sun set, a thousand purple shadows nestled in the hollow of Ben More, and the whole desolate stony range was reflected with the most perfect fidelity in the glassy sea. The beauty of such a scene, when the great Atlantic slumbers, and all is perfect peace, is never to be forgotten by those who have once beheld it. Our yachtsmen deeply enjoyed these days of favourable weather, and nothing could be pleasanter than their evenings on deck or in the little dainty cabin, all whose pictures and mirrors were displayed at such peaceful times. A yacht carries with it all the possibilities of a civilized life, and the yachtsman is free to admire the beauties of nature without having to pay too dearly for them by putting up with the wretched accommodation to be found in such desolate regions as those which the *Alaria* was visiting. But if our friends duly appreciated the comfort which the little vessel afforded, they were far from spending the days in mere luxurious indolence. They explored on foot the islands of Ulva and Gometra, they rowed all over Loch na Keal in the yacht gig, and they ascended Ben More (according to the Captain's rule) from which they had one of the grandest views in Great Britain, with the Atlantic

granite and porphyry, with Loch Etive on one side of us and Loch Awe on the other, one of them a remarkably fine example of a salt water loch, or fiord, and the other an equally fine example of the fresh-water lake, whilst all around us are the greatest mountains in the Highlands. There, to the west, we have the sea with its isles, and to the south the view stretches away even to the lowland plain. The top of Ben Cruachan is a wonderful place for studying the conformation of the country. Loch Etive is very interesting to geologists, because it supports a certain line of geological reasoning. It is argued that a valley like Loch Etive cannot possibly have been scooped out by the sea, and nature herself confirms this reasoning here, for there is a rocky barrier at Connal Ferry, which the sea has not yet cleared away, though the tide rushes over it violently, and yet higher up the loch the water is more than four hundred feet deep."

"How do you believe these valleys were made?" Greenfield asked.

"The most probable theory, in my opinion, is that they were gradually hollowed, in immense spaces of time, by the action of rainwater and ice, and that after the valleys sank below the level of the sea they were filled either with sea-water as Loch Etive is, if the sea end were open, or else with fresh water from their own streams as Loch Awe is, if the sea end were closed. You can see the work of water everywhere, in all those ravines on the mountain sides; the mountains are in fact *sculptured* by water. And as for glacier-ice there are evidences of its action within reach of my telescope; for instance, those pretty islands in Loch Awe are polished, where the rock lies bare, by the operation of glaciers, and the marks of their passage are distinctly traceable all along the lake-shores, whilst at the other end

of it the barrier that keeps it from the sea is all worn by glacier-ice that at some very remote period must have been slowly flowing southwards. There is evidence, too, that in those times the whole country must have been very much higher, so that the peak we are standing on must have been an alpine peak surrounded by perpetual snow, and there was certainly a great glacier in Loch Etive, flowing down to the sea ; and another in the valley of Loch Awe, just as the glaciers to-day flow down the ravines of Jan Mayen into the Arctic Sea. At that time what we now see as islands must have been part of the mainland, and what are now submarine mountains were islands. By a little exercise of imagination, with the help of what we can still see in arctic and alpine countries, we may picture to ourselves pretty accurately the Alpine Scotland of the past."

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to the west, and all the Breadalbane mountains to the east, across the broad Loch Linnhe.

Just as they were beginning the descent of this mountain the Captain said :

"It has been quite sultry and oppressive to-day, and now there are a quantity of mares' tails in the sky. Look how the seagulls are hanging about shore. We shall have a change of weather with a strong west wind, and I certainly would rather be somewhere else than here if it comes to blow hard from that quarter, whilst, if it were a sou'wester that would be still worse for us."

"But we are very well sheltered in that little strait at Ulva," Calverley said, "even against a sou'wester."

"So we are, no doubt, but we might be kept there for some days, which would scarcely be pleasant, and besides, I want to get to Skye on account of my letters. Now with a strong westerly, or south-westerly gale, we should have a difficulty in getting out of Loch Tua, between Gometra and Mull, and we should have to run it rather fine between the Treshinish isles and the north-west point of Mull. My opinion is that we must not lose a minute, but weigh anchor as soon as we get to the yacht. I'm anxious to get past the point of Ardnamurchan and up into Sleat Sound. If once we could slip through the little strait which separates Skye from the mainland, we should be on the sheltered side of that island, and could then sail to Portree, quite at our leisure, and explore the island with ponies and the tent."

"Have you a tent on board?" asked Harry.

"Yes, I always carry a tent. It is no encumbrance in a yacht, and it is often of the greatest use in excursions. We have everything necessary for an encampment, though on a small scale."

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short ones, as sailors call them ; or, in other words, a long tack which carried her westwards, but too much towards the shore of Mull, and then a short tack in a south-easterly direction to recover an offing, or sufficient distance from the land, the *Alaria* reached the south-westerly point of Mull at five in the afternoon. After threading through some low rocky islands, in a manner which strikingly exhibited the Captain's skill as a steersman, they came to Iona itself, and anchored near its miserable little village, in sight of the ecclesiastical ruins. The gig was lowered immediately, and our friends spent an hour amongst the ruins, but returned to the yacht to dinner, as the Captain intended to remain the next day to take sketches and notes. Harry and Greenfield, who were familiar with the famous ruined abbeys of Yorkshire, were not strongly impressed by the size or beauty of the remains at Iona, and they said so to the Captain at dinner-time.

"It is not the mere outward appearance of things," he answered, "which attracts us to places, and makes us remember them afterwards. The great power of a place is its history. I quite agree with your estimate of the ruins here, for many a church and abbey in the south is beyond all comparison superior to them ; and, indeed, many a Gothic building erected in our own day shows both more knowledge of architecture and a more cultivated taste, and as for the island, it has no natural beauty to recommend it, being a mere expanse of rocks and bogs, without charm or interest of any visible kind. Yet, in spite of the want of beauty, Iona is one of the most famous places in the world, and one of those which affect the feelings most powerfully. When St. Columba came here in the sixth century, and made this barren little island his head-quarters, the inhabitants of this western coast of Scotland were all

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"They certainly had a code of morals, and a manner of life, very different from those of the civilization we are accustomed to, but Columba and his fellow-missionaries must have succeeded in making a durable impression on the people of those times, or else their memory would not have been venerated as it has always been. No missionary can hope to civilize barbarians all at once, but it is a great deal if he can set before them the example of a blameless life, and make them respect something so entirely outside of their own violent habits."

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for Iona itself, it presented nothing but a dark mass with an irregular outline, apparently floating on the motionless water, and in it you might dimly distinguish the old Gothic ruins of the cathedral and the chapel of St. Oransa, and the sculptured crosses and tombs where the saints and princes rest. During the whole night the twilight remained, as it does in northern latitudes in the long days, so that when the larboard watch began at midnight the light was like that of late evening in the south. A thin young moon, it is true, hung over the stony hills of Mull, but she contributed very little in the way of illumination, though much to the poetry of the scene. When this soft evening twilight became paler and paler, the thin moon became faint and hard to find, and lo! the delicate shadow of the northern night was already passing away, and it was dawn!

Of course, they went to Staffa, that wonderful isle of basalt columns, with the caves where the ocean thunders in tempest, or softly murmurs in the rare calm days of summer. It was so calm that our party could enter the caves in the boat whilst the *Alaria* tacked about to keep within reach. They spent several hours upon the island, not being called away in a hurry like the unfortunate visitors who come in the public steamboat, and the Captain, as usual, under such circumstances, talked geology a little in his own way, which consisted chiefly in answering Greenfield's questions. Not wishing to enclose too much of the physic of information in the sweetmeat of story, I am careful not to report the Captain's talk at length, but it was a good thing for the boys to have him with them, for his explanations added greatly to the interest of what they saw. Harry and Greenfield had never visited anything like Fingal's Cave. There was a smooth low swell



to the west, and all the Breadalbane mountains to the east, across the broad Loch Linnhe.

Just as they were beginning the descent of this mountain the Captain said :

"It has been quite sultry and oppressive to-day, and now there are a quantity of mares' tails in the sky. Look how the seagulls are hanging about shore. We shall have a change of weather with a strong west wind, and I certainly would rather be somewhere else than here if it comes to blow hard from that quarter, whilst, if it were a sou'wester that would be still worse for us."

"But we are very well sheltered in that little strait at Ulva," Calverley said, "even against a sou'wester."

"So we are, no doubt, but we might be kept there for some days, which would scarcely be pleasant, and besides, I want to get to Skye on account of my letters. Now with a strong westerly, or south-westerly gale, we should have a difficulty in getting out of Loch Tua, between Gometra and Mull, and we should have to run it rather fine between the Treshinish isles and the north-west point of Mull. My opinion is that we must not lose a minute, but weigh anchor as soon as we get to the yacht. I'm anxious to get past the point of Ardnamurchan and up into Sleat Sound. If once we could slip through the little strait which separates Skye from the mainland, we should be on the sheltered side of that island, and could then sail to Portree, quite at our leisure, and explore the island with ponies and the tent."

"Have you a tent on board?" asked Harry.

"Yes, I always carry a tent. It is no encumbrance in a yacht, and it is often of the greatest use in excursions. We have everything necessary for an encampment, though on a small scale."

On reaching the foot of the mountain, where the boat was pulled up on the shingle, they rowed at full speed across the entrance to Loch na Keal, which was already ruffled by the first breathings of the coming gale. When they got to the *Alaria* the Captain did not wait to eat his dinner, but gave immediate orders for departure.

"We can dine more at our leisure," he said, "when the yacht is at sea."

The sailors, who perfectly knew the determined character of their commander, displayed an admirable activity in obeying his orders, which were given in a loud voice as soon as his foot was on the quarter-deck. In an instant the cover of the main-sail was removed and stowed away, the main and peak halyards were manned and hoisted, the gaff soon lifted, and the sail with it, the ground-tackle cleared, the fore-sail and jib got up and well set, and the anchor finally weighed. Then the *Alaria* slowly moved backwards, with her sails trembling in the breeze, till it filled the jib, and turned her head half round, after which, the steersman reversed his helm, and the *Alaria* heeled gently over and started lightly on the port tack down the narrow little sound between Ulva and Mull.

"And now we can go and dine," said the Captain.

Luckily for Harry and Greenfield they were both quite independent of sea-sickness by this time and hungry after their ascent of Ben More, so they followed the Captain's advice, who recommended them to eat a good dinner. "You will need it," he said; "we have rather a wild night before us and shall probably get little sleep. There's nothing like a good dinner as a preparation."

An hour later they were in sight of the Treshinish isles, and the Atlantic was visibly rising. There came a heavy swell from the south-west, with the crests of the waves al-

ready curling white. The sky looked "full of wind," as Brierley said.

Off Ardnamurchan, they took in a reef of the mainsail and foresail and set a smaller jib with the bowsprit reefed, and then began a very exciting course with the waves steadily rising, and a fair wind with occasional squalls, when it seemed as if the *Alaria's* nose would go under altogether. The men all wore their oil skins and sou'westers (very appropriate with the present direction of the wind), and the whole vessel had that serious look which even the daintiest pleasure yacht assumes in dangerous weather. In the dim twilight of the late evening many fishing-boats were seen retreating to the different havens along the coast in anticipation of the rising gale.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### DR. TEMPLEMAN'S NEW PROSPECTS AND PLANS.

If there is pleasure in a favourable change as to circumstances and position, it is seldom pure and unalloyed, but is generally mingled with regret. So Dr. Templeman found it when kind Fortune, or rather an old college friend of his, thought proper to acknowledge his merits by the offer of a valuable rectory in Suffolk. To refuse it would have been a great imprudence, as it was highly improbable that any such chance would offer itself again, for Dr. Templeman had but one such friend, and the friend had but one such rectory. The Doctor would have been happier, on the whole, if this piece of good-fortune might have come to him later in life, or if the rectory could simply have been laid safely aside for him, like a sum of money at his banker's, to be touched when it was wanted, but not before.

A rectory, unfortunately, cannot be so treated ; another life would come between the Doctor and this retirement—a life which would perhaps be longer than his own, and so make the reversion of no benefit to him. He liked his business as a schoolmaster so long as health and strength enabled him to bear the labour lightly, yet at the same time he was quite clearly aware that it was not a suitable

profession for the decline of life. So he accepted the rectory from motives of prudence, though it came to him as he said to himself, "at least ten or twelve years too soon."

When once the decision had been made, the Doctor found himself adrift in life, as it were, like a ship that was lying at anchor when her cable has suddenly parted, and she is not yet fixed to new moorings. Brambleby school had been very dear to him, though not in any tenderly sentimental sense. His perfect fitness for the work made the work itself a pleasure, and the regular daily round brought him a succession of little satisfactions.

Poor Mr. Barton, the tailmaster, had all the disagreeable duty of preparing the heavy soils in which they laboured, whilst the Head Master had the more congenial occupation of displaying his own scholarship before pupils already capable of feeling the weight of his superiority. Few men pass more agreeable hours than those which the Doctor spent in his morocco-covered easy-chair when the upper class in the school (already diligently prepared by Mr. Barton) listened reverentially to his scholarly exposition of a classic author, or when an intelligent private pupil (such as Calverley, for instance) sat reading with him quietly for an hour together, taking in every commentary with which the page might be illuminated or enlivened. This latter satisfaction might still be his at Sudenham Rectory where (as we know from Mrs. Blount's letter) he intended to take private pupils; but he would miss the daily visits to the class-room, where his entrance, though of such frequent occurrence, had never yet failed to create a sensation of awe, and he would miss, above all, that feeling of conscious importance which belonged to the dignity of Head Master.

No man except the captain of a ship feels so clothed with authority as the Head Master of a school, even when it is such a little one as Brambleby Grammar School.

However, all that was over now and belonged to the past, just as much as those more distant times when Dr. Templeman had been a school-boy himself. The second volume of his life was closed, and the third was only opened as far as the title-page. Under such circumstances as these the wisest and steadiest of men cannot help feeling very much unsettled, and this unsettled feeling will of itself produce a great change in his habits of thinking and in his ways of looking upon things in general. This, as the reader will very soon perceive, is exactly what happened to Dr. Templeman.

When he tried to picture to himself the new life that lay before him in the rectory at Sudenham, when he tried to imagine the daily routine of his existence there, severed from the school, severed from habits which had become part of his very nature, the new life seemed so strange that all the material comfort of a good income was not enough to make him feel at home in it. Something, evidently, was wanting, what could that something be?

"I do believe," said the Doctor to himself one evening as he sat alone in his lodgings at Buxton, "I do believe that I am beginning to understand it. The light is beginning to dawn upon me now, and it seems as if I saw rather more clearly." Then Dr. Templeman laughed to himself and jumped up from his chair with strange alacrity for a person of his years. The rooms he had taken were a sort of drawing-room, with a bedroom close to it on the same floor, and over the drawingroom chimney-piece there was a handsome looking-glass. The present lodger had hitherto been no more aware of the presence of such an

ornament than if it had never existed, but it was evidently thrown away upon him no longer. He looked at himself very carefully, holding the candle in his hand. He lifted the candle up to give himself the benefit of that light from above which the marriageable virgins of old Rome sought in the sky-lighted Pantheon when first they were beheld by their betrothed, and then he held the candle very low till he appeared as unlike himself as a tragedian before the foot-lights. He opened his lips and grinned to see whether the mirror would report favourably of his teeth, and his left hand arranged with art the locks of grizzling brown hair which, like a wreath of laurel, surrounded his denuded occiput. Then he set down the candle on the table, turned his back to the mirror, and gave himself up to reflections of another kind.

"I don't look like an undergraduate, it's true; but I am not an old man in years, and still less in constitution. However, it's no use deluding myself and fancying that a schoolmaster like me would ever suit a young woman, and I don't want to be plagued with one. But I do think that that rectory at Sudenham would be a much pleasanter place to go to if there were a respectable elderly lady to be mistress of the house. A rectory without a rector's wife seems scarcely natural."

All this was the result of a change of prospects and habits. The newspapers say that a man's mind has been unsettled when they mean that he has lost his senses and is going to drown himself. We may use the same expression about Dr. Templeman, but without the least desire to imply any loss of sanity. He was as sane as he could be, but still his mind was very much unsettled, and this led him to think of marrying, an idea which would never have occurred to him in the routine of his life at Brambleby.



It is even possible that if he had gone straight to Sudenham, instead of taking a holiday in Derbyshire, he would have found something to occupy him at the rectory, and felt at home there in a few days ; after which the private pupils would have arrived, and then, in the old mill-round of tuition, he would have settled down, as a man of mature age does so willingly, to do the allotted work of each week as it came and went. However, it is of little use to speculate on what might have been.

Here was Dr. Templeman all by himself in a Buxton lodging, with nothing particular to do, and a mind unsettled by a very great change in his prospects, so his thoughts were not occupied by the present, but ran on to the future years.

His acquaintance amongst ladies was not very extensive, and he wanted some lady whom he could trust. Not being in love with anybody, he determined to make a choice by the simple exercise of reason.

"She must be a good safe trustworthy woman," he thought ; "and if she had an income of her own it would be all the better."

Now it is a very odd thing, that just as the Doctor thought this, the image of a certain lady became visible in his mind's eye : not a vague image, at all, of some lady in general, but a very definite one of a lady in particular, who was known to him, and is known to the reader also. That lady was Mrs. Blount.

One or two things require explanation here. Dr. Templeman may have been a little dazzled by the impression that Mrs. Blount was a rich woman. People who live in town are often tempted to exaggerate the expenditure of those who live in the country, because the country people have larger houses, and generally keep some sort of

a carriage; and also perhaps because when they go into a town to do a little shopping, and see their friends, they are generally dressed up for the occasion so as to look even better than the inhabitants of towns themselves. The general belief at Brambleby was that Mrs. Blount was a very rich woman indeed. Did she not keep a carriage and pair? Was she not always dressed as well as any lady in the place? The scrupulous regularity of all her little payments kept her in good repute also with the tradespeople. Then she was Mrs. Blount, of Bilsbury Grange, a good large house, which stood on an estate of its own with a little park, and a carriage-drive, and such like evidences of aristocracy. It was natural, therefore, that Dr. Templeman should believe Mrs. Blount to be rich, and his impression about her age was by no means that of the reader of this history, who has been thinking of her all along as Harry's grandmother, and who has heard her spoken of as an old woman. Age does not entirely depend upon the number of years which have passed over a person's head. Mrs. Blount had lived sixty years, but she was not more than fifty in constitution and appearance. In fact Mrs. Blount and Dr. Templeman looked very nearly the same age, and he judged simply by appearances, not having the slightest notion when or where Mrs. Blount was born, though he supposed that she and her son must have both made early marriages.

He thought about the subject till midnight, and then he went to bed. The next morning he thought of Mrs. Blount again, and in the afternoon he paid her a visit. He had no intention of proposing that day, but still she thought him rather odd, as there was something peculiar in his manner. The lady only intended to stay a fortnight longer at Buxton, so there was not much time to lose. He

had a nice excuse for calling, in asking whether any letters had been received from the Alaria, which seemed to interest him so particularly that Mrs. Blount thought him admirably solicitous about the welfare of his pupils.

Matters went on in this way for a week to the lady's increasing astonishment.

"Really," she said to herself, "Dr. Templeman comes here very often—too often. I wish he knew somebody else in Buxton! The keeper of the lodging-house will begin to think it strange." And after that, for several days, she contrived to be out when the Doctor was likely to call, and she went to Haddon and Chatsworth with Mr. Healaugh and his sister, and Alice.

She returned from this excursion after an absence of a single night, spent at the quiet Peacock Hotel at Rowsley, near Haddon Hall. The very next day Dr. Templeman called again.

This time he had positively made up his mind to give utterance to his thoughts, and had settled in his own way exactly how it was to be done. He began accordingly, as he generally did, by asking if there were any news from Harry.

"There is no news since I last saw you, Dr. Templeman. You remember that he was then in the Isle of Skye, where they had some very rainy weather."

"Have you decided, Mrs. Blount, whether to send him to another school on his return, or still to Brambleby?"

"I can hardly decide about that until I know who is elected to be your successor. The trustees are to meet next week to elect him, and they say that there are already a number of candidates, some of them very able men. If I thought that there was no danger of a falling-off in the teaching of Brambleby school, I might probably keep Harry

there. It is pleasant to me to have him within driving distance of Bilsbury Grange."

"No doubt, no doubt. But may not it become desirable that Harry should soon have more special attention than he can receive as an ordinary schoolboy? He has made great progress, but he may need more private and special attention to prepare him for one of the universities."

"It is much too soon for him to become a private pupil, Dr. Templeman, even if we thought it necessary."

This was rather a defeat for the Doctor, whose project had been to open the campaign by trying to get Harry as a private pupil at Sudenham. If Mrs. Blount had consented to this, he would have added an invitation to the lady herself to accompany her son in another capacity; but now if he really cared at all to have Harry for a pupil he must begin at the other end, and first get Mrs. Blount to be his wife, which seemed a much more formidable undertaking. However, the gentleman's mind was made up, so at it he went, with remarkable courage, considering the nature of his reception.

"I had hoped," he said, "that Harry might have come to Sudenham as a private pupil."

"He would be separated from me by a long distance. It is a long way from Sudenham to Bilsbury."

"I had not wished him to be separated from you, Mrs. Blount. I should have been glad if you could have come to Sudenham also—to the rectory."

There is a moment on these occasions when all is clear to the lady, however obscure it may have been a moment before. All was now clear to Mrs. Blount. She fixed her penetrating gray eyes on the Doctor, and thought she might as well help him through his little difficulty, so she said—

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convenient opportunity. You want a suitable wife ; I think I can find you one ; will you promise to come here to tea this evening at seven ? There will be a lady here, and a gentleman also, who in case the plan were realized, would be your brother-in-law. We shall pass a very pleasant evening, I am sure, if the matter goes no farther. The lady would cost nothing to keep, but bring you a nice little fortune, seven or eight thousand pounds ; she belongs to one of the oldest families in Yorkshire, and she is the very best manager of a household that I ever knew in my life. So if you take my advice you will immediately give up thinking about old granny Blount and look elsewhere. At any rate I count on your coming to-night if only to prove that you bear me no ill-will."

This was said so pleasantly that the Doctor at once accepted. His first disappointment occasioned him but little bleeding of the heart, and he left the lady's presence without any of those feelings of despair which are usually attributed to disappointed lovers. He neither drowned his cares in wine nor his body in water, but simply took a walk in the pretty neighbourhood of Buxton and returned to his lodgings in time to dress for Mrs. Blount's quiet little tea-party.

She received him without the least constraint of manner a quarter of an hour before the other guests arrived, and she talked very intelligently about Chatsworth and Haddon, and the charming Derbyshire scenery. If any eaves-dropper had listened at the key-hole he would have detected nothing to give him the slightest clue to the nature of the conversation which had passed between the same persons, in the same room, only a few hours before.

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### DR. TEMPLEMAN'S NEW PROSPECTS AND PLANS.

If there is pleasure in a favourable change as to circumstances and position, it is seldom pure and unalloyed, but is generally mingled with regret. So Dr. Templeman found it when kind Fortune, or rather, an old college friend of his, thought proper to acknowledge his merits by the offer of a valuable rectory in Suffolk. To refuse it would have been a great imprudence, as it was highly improbable that any such chance would offer itself again, for Dr. Templeman had but one such friend, and the friend had but one such rectory. The Doctor would have been happier, on the whole, if this piece of good-fortune might have come to him later in life, or if the rectory could simply have been laid safely aside for him, like a sum of money at his banker's, to be touched when it was wanted, but not before.

A rectory, unfortunately, cannot be so treated ; another life would come between the Doctor and this retirement—a life which would perhaps be longer than his own, and so make the reversion of no benefit to him. He liked his business as a schoolmaster so long as health and strength enabled him to bear the labour lightly, yet at the same time he was quite clearly aware that it was not a suitable

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profession for the decline of life. So he accepted the rectory from motives of prudence, though it came to him as he said to himself, "at least ten or twelve years too soon."

When once the decision had been made, the Doctor found himself adrift in life, as it were, like a ship that was lying at anchor when her cable has suddenly parted, and she is not yet fixed to new moorings. Brambleby school had been very dear to him, though not in any tenderly sentimental sense. His perfect fitness for the work made the work itself a pleasure, and the regular daily round brought him a succession of little satisfactions.

Poor Mr. Barton, the tailmaster, had all the disagreeable duty of preparing the heavy soils in which they laboured, whilst the Head Master had the more congenial occupation of displaying his own scholarship before pupils already capable of feeling the weight of his superiority. Few men pass more agreeable hours than those which the Doctor spent in his morocco-covered easy-chair when the upper class in the school (already diligently prepared by Mr. Barton) listened reverentially to his scholarly exposition of a classic author, or when an intelligent private pupil (such as Calverley, for instance) sat reading with him quietly for an hour together, taking in every commentary with which the page might be illuminated or enlivened. This latter satisfaction might still be his at Sudenham Rectory where (as we know from Mrs. Blount's letter) he intended to take private pupils; but he would miss the daily visits to the class-room, where his entrance, though of such frequent occurrence, had never yet failed to create a sensation of awe, and he would miss, above all, that feeling of conscious importance which belonged to the dignity of Head Master.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### NEWS FROM THE ALARIA.

THE reader may remember how, in the course of the last chapter but one, a letter was casually mentioned as having come to Mrs. Blount from the Isle of Skye. By way of giving a little variety to our narrative, we print the letter just as it was written, so that now Master Harry is left to tell his own story.

“Yacht Alaria, Portree, Skye,  
“*July 19.*

“DEAR GRANDMAMMA,

“Since I wrote to you from Oban, giving an account of our voyage from Liverpool and the ascent of Ben Cruachan, we have come farther north. First, however, we saw Iona and Staffa. . . . (Here follows an account of these islands, and of Mull, which we omit.) We came up the Sleat Sound in the night, and entered the narrow strait between Skye and the mainland in the early morning, getting into the narrowest part about three o'clock, when it was already daylight; indeed, there seems to be no night here, for even between twelve and one we could see the land well enough, though there was no moon. We

passed this narrow strait into Loch Alsh, which is just like a fresh-water lake, and seems entirely surrounded by mountains, but there is a way out of it at Kylehaken. All this part is most beautiful, but once through the strait at Kylehaken, the sea widens again. We had a nice passage to Portree, as the Isle of Skye sheltered us from the wind that was blowing from the west, but there were squalls now and then from the mountains.

"The Captain had intended to set out immediately with ponies and a tent, to explore the interior of the island, on account of its geology, but it has done nothing but rain ever since we got to Portree, and it looks as if the rain would never cease. Sometimes they say it lasts all summer on the western islands. So we are at anchor in the harbour of Portree, which is as calm as it can be, though the wind is blowing over our heads. We pass nearly all our time in the cabin, but when we want a little fresh air we go on deck with an umbrella, and promenade ourselves, three yards in one direction, and four in the other. This is our way of getting an appetite for dinner. We live jolly well on board the *Alaria*, I assure you, and have capital fresh fish, which we catch ourselves. Greenfield caught a cod yesterday, and I caught half-a-dozen cuddies. In spite of the rain, we went with the gig (not a two-wheeled gig, grandmamma, but a boat) to the mouth of a small stream, and there we caught ten fine sea-trout. It's very pleasant to be on the yacht, even when we are kept in port by bad weather. We spend our evenings very comfortably in the main cabin, playing chess and backgammon, or studying something. The Captain has taken me in hand as a sort of private pupil; he says I must be a yachtsman, and he makes me learn seamanship and navigation. I know a good bit already. I know all



about the dead-reckoning, the rectification of a ship's place on the chart by an observation at noon with the sextant, the use of the chronometer and the compass. It's quite surprising how soon one gets accustomed to the points of the compass—but then people are always talking about them on board ship.

"The Captain has not given up his idea of going into the interior of the island with a tent, but we must have better weather before we can set out. He intends to hire ten ponies. I hope you are quite well, dear grandmamma, and remain,

"Your very affectionate grandson,

"H. BLOUNT."

Some days afterwards Mrs. Blount returned to Bilsbury Grange, and there she found another letter from Harry.

"It's pleasant to be welcomed by a letter from my boy," she thought; "it's almost as if he welcomed me himself."

We will print this second letter also, but without the beginning and ending, which were in Harry's usual form when writing to his grandmother.

"We have just got back to the yacht after our excursion in the interior of the island; but first I must tell you that the yacht itself has come round from Portree to a bay on the west coast, called Loch Bracadale, and we all remained on board, instead of crossing over by land, as the Captain said there was some wonderful coast-scenery. I never saw anything like it; we have no notion in Lancashire and Yorkshire of such coast-scenery as this. The cliffs, for fifteen miles, are four or five hundred feet high, and often in columns and pinnacles. At one place, a cascade spouts into the sea, like water out of a tap, from a height of three hundred feet. The Captain had the gig

lowered here, and we all went behind the cascade in it. The rain had made a flood in the stream, and there was plenty of water, so it came thundering into the sea tremendously; and if our boat had got under, we shouldn't have been heard of again. We saw plenty more wild cliff-scenery to the north; but this place, Loch Bracadale, is tamer. Still there are rocky pinnacles, called Macleod's Maidens, and the Cuchullin Hills behind, looking very wild and rugged, and, generally, of a sort of purple lead-colour, not like the colour of Ingleborough, or Pendle Hill. We have been out with the tent, amongst the hills, and I wish I could describe all the wild places we have been in. Gordale is nothing to it, though Gordale is so grand. Such rocks! there is no end of them. The Captain is making a collection of mineralogical specimens, enough to ballast a ship; and, if he goes on, he will have tons of them in the hold of the yacht before we go southwards: however, the sailors say that she will sail all the better for it. I shall bring specimens of my own to Bilsbury. Many of them are worth a good deal of money; Calverley says they would fetch high prices in London.

"It's very jolly going with the tent. We walk at least thirty miles a-day geologizing, and the sailors pitch the tent for us, and cook our dinner in some quiet nook where there is grass for the ponies. We don't live *quite* so well as on board the yacht, but our appetites are even better, as we take more exercise. Calverley has a pedometer, and one day it marked thirty-three miles, as the distance we had gone, whilst it has not marked less than twenty-seven since we started. It rains sometimes rather heavily still, but we get shelter of some sort. One wet day we had to stay in the tent all day. I will tell you much more about what we have seen when we come back. We sail

from here to-morrow morning, in a south-westerly direction, for the Barra Isles. We saw South Uist this evening very clearly at sunset, though there are thirty miles of sea between us and it. You must not expect any more news from the *Alaria* for some time, as the Captain says there is not a mail every day from the islands we are going to."

Mrs. Blount followed the voyage of the *Alaria* on the map, and even marked the vessel's course with a lead-pencil, not in a minute nautical manner, with zigzags for tacks, but like the course of a steamer. She now, therefore, added a line from Portree to Loch Bracadale, round the northern extremity of the island, and was going to add another from thence to the Barra Isles, when she checked herself, saying, "It will be time to make that, when I hear of their safe arrival."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### A DARK TIME COME AGAIN.

MR. MASHAM, the worthy Vicar of Bilsbury, took in the *Leeds Intelligencer*, and was in the habit of forwarding that newspaper to the Grange for Mrs. Blount's perusal. He generally read it first himself, however, to begin with, and would often carry it to the lady in his pocket, a pleasant neighbourly attention, for which she was always grateful.

"I haven't been to see Mrs. Blount since she came back from Buxton," he said to his wife at dinner, "but I will go this afternoon and take her the newspaper."

"Is there anything in the paper to-day?"

"I really don't know yet, for I haven't had time to open it, but we can read it when Mrs. Blount has finished."

As he was walking slowly towards the Grange the Vicar thought he might as well read the latest telegrams, so he took the paper out of his pocket and began. Then his eyes glanced down the different columns, and his face wore the expression of a man who finds nothing to interest him. Suddenly, however, this expression entirely changed. He stopped short in his walk, held the paper out with both arms, as if to stretch every crease out of it, fixed his eye on one paragraph and read it three or four times over. His face became deadly pale, his lower jaw fell, and he went to

sit down for an instant on a heap of stones by the roadside like a man seized with a sudden faintness. After resting nearly ten minutes, during which he read the paragraph twice or three times more, he returned the paper to his pocket, got up, and walked back to his own house instead of going to the Grange as he intended.

"There is a paragraph in this paper," Mr. Masham said to his wife, "which Mrs. Blount must not be permitted to see if it can possibly be avoided." His wife took the newspaper and read as follows :—

"EXTRAORDINARY DISAPPEARANCE OF A YACHT.—We learn from Liverpool, that the yacht, *Alaria*, of the Royal Mersey Yacht Club, a cutter of twenty-five tons, has disappeared under the following extraordinary circumstances. Her owner, William Calverley, Esq., was enjoying a cruise amongst the Hebrides, when, on arriving at the Isle of South Uist, he quitted the vessel along with his brother and several men to make a geological excursion in the interior of the island. The yacht was left at anchor in charge of two sailors, and two young gentlemen were left on board. A sudden gale of wind appears to have sprung up during the night and the yacht must have dragged her anchor, for she has totally disappeared. Much blame is attached to the sailors who were left in charge, as they did not pass the night on board, and the greatest anxiety is felt as to the fate of the two young gentlemen who are believed to have been in their berths when the yacht got adrift. From the direction of the wind she would be carried out into the Atlantic Ocean, towards the Arctic Sea."

This was plain enough, but to make the paragraph more specially interesting to Yorkshire people, the editor had added a few lines in brackets.

[Since going to press we have ascertained that the two young gentlemen mentioned above both belong to Yorkshire. One of them is Mr. Harry Blount, of Billsbury Grange, and the other, Mr. Greenfield, son of the eminent solicitor in Bradford. Both are very young.—ED.]

"I really *dare not* go to the Grange," said the Vicar. "My face would betray me at once. It will kill poor Mrs. Blount! It is all that terrible anxiety over again which she suffered fourteen years ago about her son. Poor Harry! poor Harry! To think that we shall never see him again!"

"There may be a chance yet," said Mrs. Masham after the first shock was over; "we don't know that the yacht is wrecked."

"Yes, there is just a shadow of a chance, and that will make Mrs. Blount's anxiety all the more terrible to bear. She will go on hoping and hoping, for weeks and months, perhaps for years, like Lady Franklin."

The Vicar did not go to the Grange that evening, but determined to go the next day. When tea was on the table the servant said that Mrs. Blount had sent her kind regards and asked for the newspaper. She would be glad if the Vicar and Mrs. Masham could go and spend the evening. He took a pair of scissors and cut the paragraph out, after which he sent the paper with a note of excuse. But the next morning, very soon after post-time, Jim came to the Vicarage in a great hurry. "Oh, sir!" he said, "you must come to the Grange, the missus is in a terrible way. She's got a letter about Master Harry, and she says he's lost at sea."

The letter was from Calverley. It fully confirmed the newspaper paragraph, but at the same time the writer had

evidently taken the greatest pains to show Mrs. Blount what reasonable grounds of hope still remained. "Our two young friends," he said, "were not likely to do anything imprudent with the yacht, and if nothing imprudent were done the probability was that the yacht would live through it. My brother," he added, "started as soon as possible after the Alaria in a fishing-smack, and I am going in another to Skye to post this letter and get a yacht or steamer to engage in the search. I deeply regret the anxiety which you, dear Mrs. Blount, must necessarily suffer, and which I fully share, but I preferred writing to you at once lest the news should reach you in another shape. Do, pray, try to bear up and wait hopefully for better news!"

Mr. Masham went alone to the Grange. "Tell Mrs. Blount I will go to her whenever she thinks I might be a comfort," his wife said. On his return the Vicar gave the following account of his visit:—

"I found her apparently in a better state than I expected. She is struggling hard not to let herself be cast down. The anxiety is dreadful, of course, and this is only the beginning. The effect of anxiety increases very much with time, but I think she will bear up for a few days or even weeks. She talks of setting off for Scotland; perhaps this might be a good thing, perhaps the feeling of doing something would be a benefit to her. But I said that Liverpool would be a surer place to get news of the boat, than some outlandish spot on the Scottish coast. Besides, the Calverleys will write whenever they can."

At last it was decided that Mrs. Blount would remain at the Grange, and this decision was the more reasonable that Calverley had said it was unlikely that there could be any news for at least a week, on account of the difficulty

of communication amongst the western isles. Notwithstanding this kindly intended remark of Calverley's, the post-time became very terrible to Mrs. Blount, and every day she felt quite ill before the postman came, and worse when he went away again without having brought her anything relative to the one subject which occupied her thoughts. Towards the end of the week she determined to set off at once for Oban, and had begun to pack up a small portmanteau for the journey, when the reflection occurred that if she left Bilsbury now, when a letter might come any morning, she would perhaps miss it and remain longer in suspense than if she stayed quietly where she was. Nothing came, but soon there was another reason for not leaving Bilsbury. Total sleeplessness and loss of appetite were rapidly undermining Mrs. Blount's naturally vigorous health: She had become too ill to travel.

Meanwhile the newspapers made a fuss concerning this new mystery, and thousands of people, all over the kingdom, were speculating about the fate of the two boys and the yacht. The mystery was agreeably interesting to the public mind, it added zest to the journals, and afforded something to talk about at dinner-tables, so that the life of the nation was a little less dull because of it. Knowing men even betted upon the subject, and the odds were against the return of the Alaria. At the same time there were anxious hearts and pillows not visited by soothing sleep, both at Bilsbury and Bradford.

"Mr. Masham," said Mrs. Blount, "this is just the same illness that I suffered from when the Guadalquivir was lost in the Bay of Biscay. It is hard to have to go through it all a second time."



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### HOW IT HAPPENED—AND AFTER.

WHAT happened at South Uist may be very easily and briefly explained.

The *Alaria* had duly arrived there, after an exploration of the Barra Isles, and it was now the Captain's project to do in South Uist exactly what he had done in Skye, or in other words to make a geological exploration of the country. It so happened, however, that, although Harry's vigorous constitution had enabled him to bear quite easily the fatigues which the party had undergone in the expedition with the tent, Greenfield's less robust nature had not borne them nearly so well. He was really over-fatigued, though he would not acknowledge it, but besides this he was ill, and this he was compelled to acknowledge. A low fever, the consequence of cold and exposure, had taken possession of him, so that the Captain would not permit him to accompany the encamping expedition to Mount Hecla, which, though not a volcano like its namesake, is the principal mountain in the island. On this Harry declared that he should remain with Greenfield to take care of him.

The western shore of South Uist is in some respects safer than the eastern, being less rocky and much flatter and more sandy, so as the Captain, after his exploration of

Barra, happened to be sailing on that side the island, he cast anchor there and set off at once into the interior with his brother and the men, except two, who were left to take care of the *Alaria* and serve our two young friends. In this the Captain committed one grave mistake, for the men were not his old sailors but the two fresh hands who had joined him for the first time on this cruise. They appeared very honest respectable fellows, and one of them could cook very nicely, which was the principal reason for leaving him, as the Captain's own servant, who cooked generally, was absolutely indispensable in the scientific excursion to Mount Hecla.

The night after the departure of the land expedition was exceedingly calm, and both Blount and Greenfield were in their own little cabin. The repose of the motionless vessel did Greenfield good, and he fell asleep very early. Seeing that his companion was asleep, Blount got into his own berth, and soon followed his example.

At this time the two sailors were on deck, and as their eyes ranged along the dreary uninteresting western shore of the island, which consists of nothing but treeless fields and heaths, one of them espied at a considerable distance a thin wreath of blue smoke which rose straight in the evening air.

"Bob, what's that smoke? Let's go and see. The young 'uns is all right in their berths."

The suggestion was acted upon; the dingey, which had been floating idly, fastened to the yacht by her painter, was silently drawn alongside, and the men pulled away from the *Alaria*. The smoke proved to be that of a small illicit distillery, such as are occasionally to be met with yet in very out-of-the-way places amongst the Western Isles. It was a rude little affair, suspended from rough poles,

with a spiral tube hidden in a common cask of water, and all sufficiently portable to be set up in one place or another as the fear of a revenue cutter might dictate; but however rude it may have been, the whisky that it distilled was good enough for the proudest Duke in Scotland. The arrival of the sailors at first alarmed the islanders engaged in this interesting little operation, but when the distillers perceived that the new-comers were friends they gave them whisky. The sailors had money and bought more whisky, then they got drunk and passed the night in a sort of hut sheltered by a little hill.

About one in the morning, when they were plunged in the stupefied sleep of drunkenness, there sprang up suddenly a breeze from the east, which increased to a gale of wind. The *Alaria* dragged her anchor out into the deep sea, and floated away into the Atlantic Ocean.

When the sailors returned to the beach she was already out of sight. They immediately guessed what had happened, and tried to get away from the island, dreading the consequences of their desertion.

The news did not reach the Calverleys until two days later, when the delinquent sailors were already in hiding in one of the smaller islands to the southward, whence they got to Greenock in a fishing-smack which went there to take fish to market by way of the Sound of Mull and the Crinan Canal.

Harry and Greenfield were both by this time too much accustomed to the motion of the waves to be awakened by it before their usual hour, so they slept on quite comfortably. They *did* awake, however, at last, and Harry came on deck. He looked first to the east, where the island of South Uist had been when he went to bed—then he looked to the west, and finally he gave a rapid

glance all round the horizon. The next thing he did was to get down into the forecabin to rouse the men, but seeing that their berths were empty he returned in haste to his own cabin, where Greenfield was lying very comfortably, rather wondering why the yacht tossed about so at her anchorage.

"I say, Greenfield, how do you feel this morning?"

"A great deal better. Indeed I think I'm all right to-day."

"Particularly glad to hear it, old fellow—always glad to hear you are well, but most especially and particularly so this morning."

"What do you mean, Harry? you look very odd. What's the matter now?"

"Merely this, that we are out at sea, and there's not a living creature on board except you and me and Minimus. Just dress yourself and come on deck."

Greenfield was soon on deck, and having satisfied himself at a glance that the *Alaria* was already out of sight of land the next thing he did was to go to the binnacle and have a look at the compass.

"We're drifting due west," he said, "that's evident. It's an east wind which is driving us into the middle of the Atlantic. I wish the clouds had not been so very thick, one cannot make out where the sun is. The wind is strong, but the waves are not *very* high. We've seen them higher than that."

"I suppose it's because we don't get the full roll of the Atlantic. This wind comes over Scotland, and Scotland makes a sort of breakwater for us."

"Yes, but the farther we drift the bigger the waves will be."

"We're in a pretty position!" said Harry; "I can't

help thinking of my poor grandmother. She would be very miserable if she knew! I hope she won't know anything about it till we get back again. But the question is what's to be done?"

"The yacht is safe enough for the present," Greenfield replied; "the anchor being down the chain drags in the water and keeps her head properly up to the wind besides making us drift more slowly. She is fairly dry, though a little spray dashes over us now and then. Supposing we were able to manage her so as to beat to windward it would still be a long business to get back to our anchorage, so my opinion is that we had best get a good breakfast first of all to keep us up for the rest of the day."

Of course Harry agreed to this, for it would have required even a more intense degree of mental anxiety than that which he at present suffered from to take away his very vigorous appetite.

"But who's to do the cooking?" he inquired.

"Well, I suppose we shall be able to manage that between us. There's a cookery book in the cabin. The Captain gave you the keys of his lockers didn't he, Harry? Yes? Well, I'm glad he did, because we should have had to force them open, otherwise. Now let us see how we are off for provisions."

The Alaria was happily not badly off in this respect. There was not much fresh meat in the meat-safe, except a leg of mutton and some chops, and as to bread, the bread-locker contained nothing but a quantity of oat-cake and about thirty or forty scones, a sort of cake made in the Highlands with butter-milk, which Harry liked very much, but which does not keep long. However, there was plenty of salt beef, for the Captain had purchased a whole cow at the Isle of Skye, and she had not yet entirely dis-

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As he was walking slowly towards the Grange the Vicar thought he might as well read the latest telegrams, so he took the paper out of his pocket and began. Then his eyes glanced down the different columns, and his face wore the expression of a man who finds nothing to interest him. Suddenly, however, this expression entirely changed. He stopped short in his walk, held the paper out with both arms, as if to stretch every crease out of it, fixed his eye on one paragraph and read it three or four times over. His face became deadly pale, his lower jaw fell, and he went to

each was fully aware that the position was perilous, though hitherto they had suffered no discomfort.

"I say, Greenfield," observed our hero, "the waves are getting higher, don't you perceive that the motion of the boat is increasing very rapidly?"

The fact was that owing to the increase of distance from the shore of Scotland the waves were growing gradually bigger. When the two companions got on deck the ocean presented a more threatening appearance than it had done before breakfast. The waves were not only higher but also more angry-looking, and the sky no longer presented the appearance of broken clouds, but was of a dull uniform gray, with here and there a darker patch. The east wind was rising still, with occasional black squalls, the effect of which might be clearly seen on the water at a distance of two or three miles before they reached the vessel. There is something very sinister in this aspect of the sea, and it daunts the heart even of a bold man more than the full fury of the tempest itself. It was evident at a glance to our sailors that their position was getting serious, and neither of them felt inclined to joke about it.

"I wish the Captain were here, and Calverley," said Harry, "we could do without the sailors if only we had those two."

"Yes, but it's no use wishing. We must decide something for ourselves. One of us must be captain. Shall we toss up for it?"

They drew lots with a long straw and a short one from the beer-hamper, and the lot decided that Greenfield was to be captain. "It's all right," said Harry, "I will do all you tell me to do, old fellow!"

"Well, to begin with," Greenfield answered, "let's see the barometer?" The barometer was falling. "Not a

good sign, that, and I see the wind is now east by south, so we are drifting more to the north. This will never do, we don't want to go to Iceland. We must sail the yacht ourselves, there's nothing else for it."

"Do you think we can manage the mainsail? that big boom will be awkward for us in this wind."

"I don't suppose we could manage it at all, but we needn't make the attempt. We must stow away that boom with the mainsail and just set the trysail. I know where it is."

"Well, but we shall want the trysail boom; where is it?"

"A trysail has no boom."

"What a lot you *do* know, Greenfield! But must not we get in the anchor first?"

"Don't think so. It keeps her head nicely to the wind."

Owing to the admirable order in which everything was left on board the *Alaria* Greenfield found the trysail and a storm jib immediately. Then they both took in the bowsprit, which occupied some little time, as they were not accustomed to the work. Next, they set the trysail, in which Harry's strength and agility were of great use, and both of them went to the windlass to raise the anchor, which they managed better than might have been expected, thanks to the good windlass, but when it came to "catting" and "fishing" the anchor (that is, fixing it in its place) they had more trouble. However, that being done after a fashion with no more result than a good ducking from a wave, they set a storm jib, and Greenfield went to the helm. The *Alaria* immediately began to make way through the big waves, but Greenfield being now at the helm found it a more difficult thing to steer than he had imagined.



At one instant, the yacht fell off from the wind, and at another she luffed up into it, till all on board, except Minimus, began to wish there were a better steersman on the vessel. Still, it was encouraging to feel that they were doing something. The boys were both decidedly proud of themselves for getting the sails up properly, and though the weather showed no signs of improvement, but the contrary, there was the consolatory feeling that the *Alaria* was no longer drifting like a log, or the hull of an abandoned wreck.

It was probably a good thing for our brave but very inexperienced sailors, that the wind had been strong enough to make the use of the ordinary sails and boom entirely out of the question, and it was fortunate that Greenfield knew, theoretically at least, the use of the trysail, for the simple reason that they would probably have had some accident with the mainsail, and not have been able to manage it. A trysail (I may explain for readers who are not nautical) is nothing but a smaller sail without a boom, and with a small gaff of its own, which is used as a substitute for the cumbersome mainsail in stormy weather, because, however much you reef the latter, you have still the inconvenience of the boom, which occasionally injures, or even kills the unwary yachtsman by catching him on the head in sudden changes of wind, or as an effect of imperfect steering. Had there been no trysail on board I doubt whether Harry and Greenfield could have sailed the *Alaria* at all, but now, in consequence of the prudent precautions which they had taken, they found themselves quite sufficiently masters of her to have reasonable grounds for hope. Greenfield told Harry to throw out the patent log as soon as the vessel was under command, so that, starting from a presumed point west by north of South Uist, or, let

us say, in the same latitude as Harris, they might measure their course and know their situation on the map with some degree of accuracy. The strength of the wind was such that, notwithstanding the limited quality of canvas which they carried, and the fact that they were sailing close-hauled (or as near to the wind as they well could) in order gradually to approach the coast of Scotland, they still made a good six knots an hour. They might therefore reasonably have expected to return to South Uist had they eaten into the wind as much as the present commander imagined that they were doing, but owing to his defective steering, and the confusion occasioned by the waves, and by the frequent minor changes in the direction of the wind itself, the *Alaria* gained little or nothing. However, she was no longer drifting away into the Atlantic, and this was something.

Relieving each other alternately at the helm, the two friends held on very steadily till night-fall, without either eating or drinking. They were drenched with spray, and also by fitful showers of very cold rain which seemed rather heavier and more frequent towards night. For the first time they began to perceive what was in reality the principal danger of their position, namely that unless they could reach the coast within a limited time the mere fatigue would probably be too much for them. No land was visible yet anywhere, nor a sail on the horizon; they were too far north for the line of American trade, and too much out to sea for the coasting trade of Scotland. This, however, was a security in one respect, as it took away the danger of collision, whilst the distance from land, however disquieting for some reasons, very much diminished the danger of wrecking the *Alaria* on the rocky shores of the Hebrides.

Harry lighted the binnacle lamp and the lantern for the mast-head, which he hoisted to its proper place ; then he said, "Greenfield, do you think you could manage without me for a while, I *am* so hungry !" So, having permission to go and eat, he went and got some dinner down below, a very different meal in point of cheerfulness from the other dinners which he had eaten in that cabin. When he returned on deck Greenfield said,

"Harry, I don't think we can stand it if we are both on deck. We must take watch and watch about, short half-watches of two hours, we shall need sleep. Make us each a hot grog first, I feel chilly."

The grog warmed them and enabled them to look rather less gloomily on their situation. "What a blessing it is, Harry," observed Greenfield, as he swallowed the last sugary drop at the bottom of his glass, "that we have provisions in plenty and the means of warming ourselves ! We are better off here than we should be in many a desolate place on the land. Fancy being lost at night amongst the wild tracts in the middle of Skye, for instance, without either food or fuel !"

All this was very true, and yet when Harry found himself quite alone on the deck in the darkness, with the yacht under his own responsibility and no human being to advise him, or help him, or keep him company, nothing but the dark waves around and the murky sky above, through which not a single star could penetrate, his mind began to be invaded by very serious thoughts. He perceived now the clear possibility, notwithstanding the good-luck which, on the whole, had attended the adventure hitherto, that it might end in disaster after all, that he and his friend might be drowned in the deep sea and never heard of more, or else that at the very moment of reaching land the

Alaria might be wrecked on the terrible coasts of those western isles which the most experienced mariner dreads, and amongst which it was very improbable that either he or Greenfield could ever pilot a vessel. The night seemed to grow more and more awful. The wind came in gusts which, notwithstanding the small quantity of canvas which she carried, drove the Alaria's lee gunwale under more than once, and made Harry's heart beat violently even after she had recovered herself. The rain drove in his face too, and he was drenched with showers of spray from the waves which struck the bows. His own inexperience as a steersman was, as he felt it to be, one of the greatest dangers of his situation, but in his own simple way he perceived clearly that the loss of presence of mind would be the greatest danger of all, so he kept to his work with as much coolness as he could. After the first hour it seemed a little easier, as he now could turn the waves rather better, and so shipped less water. When Greenfield came on deck again there was a little consultation as to the best course to follow.

"We have been a long time on this tack and we ought to have sighted land." (So they would have done if they had steered better.) "But I don't care to get very near the shore in the dark. I've been looking at the chart down below in the cabin, and you've no idea how dangerous all this side of Scotland is. We should be safer in the middle of the Atlantic than in such a place as Corryvreckan, or even the straits about the Barra Islands and Uist and Harris. I wish the moon would rise, but she doesn't rise till late—two o'clock in the morning."

The consequence of Greenfield's apprehension about getting on a dangerous coast was that he allowed the Alaria to go much more freely, in fact, with the wind

almost on her beam, and, therefore, as the wind was now more southerly the yacht was actually going away from Scotland during the night, in the direction of the west coast of Ireland.

Harry managed to get through his two hours' watch without accident, and was very glad to be relieved when Greenfield came on deck, for he was already chilly and tired. The constant strain of anxiety and the unceasing motion of the waves were beginning to tell upon his strength. So as soon as Greenfield had taken the tiller, Harry went down at once to his berth, tumbled in after putting on dry clothes, and was fast asleep in an instant.

Greenfield's position was at first even more trying than Harry's had been, for he came to it before he was quite awake; however, the waves very soon awakened him by dashing spray into his face, and there came a pelting of rain besides. Still, Greenfield's watch was not so uneventful as Harry's. The wind had become more squally, and squalls in the night are enough to cause anxiety even to the most experienced seamen. At each of these gusts the steersman attempted to bring the *Alaria's* head more into the wind so that it might have less power on the sails, for he had been seriously alarmed at first on seeing the black and white water surging over the lee gunwale, and he remembered enough of the theory of sailing to know that when a sail presents its edge to the wind like the edge of a knife it scarcely offers any resistance. He could not do this as it is often done in small boats by easing the sheet, for that rope was belayed fast, so he could only luff, that is, go into the wind. Once, however, he did this rather too suddenly and too much, so that the yacht found herself in stays, and being struck by a heavy sea at the

same time went round on the other tack in spite of all Greenfield could do to prevent her. Had there been a boom to the sail it would have gone over his head, and the tackle would have run over simply to the other side, so he would have found himself on the starboard tack, and all right, but present circumstances were not so agreeable, as the sheet was on the wrong side, fast belayed, and the sail was bellying in his face. He tried to get round again on the port tack, but without success, as the yacht had lost steerage-way. He shouted for Harry, but quite in vain, as Harry was fast asleep, and the noise of the roaring wind and sea was enough to drown any human voice. Then came an awful wave, toppling over the Alaria and tumbling at last in a cataract of water that swept from the fore-castle to the taffrail. Greenfield, even under these circumstances, did not lose his wits in panic fear, but thinking "I can do nothing by myself!" quitted the tiller, rushed down into the cabin and pulled Harry out of his berth. "Come on deck," he said, "or we shall be lost!"

What a scene presented itself to Harry when he was thus suddenly brought from dreams to realities! Dark and wild realities indeed they were! The sail was flapping about and was already slit open by the violence of the wind. "We must get the sheet free!" he shouted, and they *did* get it free, but once liberated from the cleat it wriggled out of their hands like a live eel and was over the bulwark in an instant, whipping the water, and tying itself into inextricable knots. As for the sail, it was now rent in several places and flapped about with a noise like pistol-shots. The Alaria was now going simply before the wind, with her head to the wide Atlantic.

"We must get that sail down, if we can," said Greenfield, "and just scud for it with nothing but the storm

jib. Can *you* get it down, Harry? I daren't quit the tiller."

Harry went to the halyards and managed to lower the gaff, but the sail gave him infinite trouble and knocked him about dangerously; at one time nearly pulling him over-board. At length he managed to get it all in on deck, but it was so torn as to be of no use till it could be mended, and he had neither time nor skill to mend it.

"There's nothing for us now," he said, "but to go wherever the wind pleases, and it's taking us farther and farther out into the Atlantic Ocean."

"Well, we needn't despair. The yacht is all right yet. See, she goes more pleasantly now! That jib seems to lift her more up, whereas the trysail was driving her under water. The big waves seem to slip from under us. I think we're safer than we were."

"Yes, but we're getting farther and farther out, and the waves get bigger and bigger!"

"Calverley told me the east wind never lasts long on the west of Scotland, so we shall have a west wind very likely in a day or two, and then we can come back again. We'll rig up a sort of square-sail. Anything will do with a fair wind. All I'm beginning to be afraid of is meeting with some vessel in the dark. Look at the compass. Don't you see the wind has changed its direction? It blows now very much more from the north, and we shall be driven right into the track of the American vessels. That lantern at the mast-head doesn't quite satisfy me. It looks as if it wanted trimming. We need a good light more than ever."

Harry looked up at the lantern and saw that its light was getting dim, so he lowered it at once on the deck. He took it into the cabin to trim it, and in trimming, ex-

tinguished it. There was no light in the cabin (a great mistake), and Harry could not find the matches, so he came on deck to light a small candle-lantern at the binnacle, a most foolish thing to do as the sequel will show. Before Greenfield had time to say "don't," our hero had opened the binnacle to light his candle when a gust of wind extinguished both and left them in total darkness.

"You shouldn't have done that," Greenfield said, "the matches are in the cabin in a box on the shelf in the little cupboard."

Harry went down immediately to seek for them and found the box, a large one, but the only box of matches on board the *Alaria*. At the instant when he took it in his hand there came a terrific sea which swept clean over the deck and carried Greenfield off his legs. He caught at something, which proved to be the mast, and clung to it for his life, without which he would have gone overboard. The water rushed down the companion ladder in a heavy cascade and immediately flooded the floor of the cabin. The violence of the shock at the same time threw Harry off his balance and made him fall against the wainscot when he instinctively opened both hands, and every lucifer match they had on the *Alaria* fell into the swirl of salt-water about his feet.

The situation was now really critical, the waves had grown to an awful size, towering like opaque black mountains behind the little yacht, and threatening to engulf her. Not a star was visible in the densely-clouded heaven, but lights of another kind began to be visible, and these only added to the disquiet of our two young friends. They were the lanterns of ships at sea which were battling with the tempest in their own way, and able to contend against it with the knowledge of experienced captains



and the strength of sufficient crews. Greenfield's heart sank within him as he perceived this new source of danger. "We are approaching the track of the American ships," he said, "and we may possibly get run down as we have not a spark of light to show where we are."

Nor was this fear a groundless one. The lights grew more and more distinct, and at length the red and green lights of an approaching steamer were visible in vivid colour. It was scarcely possible to affect the movements of the *Alaria* with the rudder when she had no sail on her but a storm-jib. It seemed as if out of that wide trackless ocean the steamer was choosing exactly the very line which would place the little *Alaria* precisely in her path. The lights grew more and more brilliant and shone like two baleful stars.

"I wish those coloured lights were away," said Greenfield, "I don't like them!"—still they grew and increased, until at length the sound of the paddles could be heard above the waves, and the steamer bore down directly upon the *Alaria*.

She was a huge Atlantic liner, before whose sharp, thin cutwater, the strongest yacht in England would have gone down like a fishing-boat. A hundred passengers were in her splendid saloon, comfortably warmed, brilliantly lighted, thinking only of themselves, and trying to pass the time in amusement or conversation so far as the motion of the ship would let them, but never once imagining the possibility that she might send two fellow-creatures to the bottom unseen, unheard, and unlamented! The man on the look-out, however, with that keenness of sight in the gloom, which sailors acquire by practice, had a vague fancy that he distinguished something, and passed a

cry to the steersman, who, by a turn of the wheel, made the ponderous mass of the vessel deviate a little from its course, and that little saved the Alaria. The huge paddle passed close to her, churning the sea into foam, the bubbling water left a whitened track, and *that* danger was over!

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### A MEETING ON THE GREAT DEEP.

**AFTER** the *Alaria* had escaped from the steamer, her crew fully realized the danger of being at sea in the night-time without a light ; but about an hour afterwards rose a fragment of a moon behind the clouds, so that a gray light was diffused over the tumbling waves. This light was merged very soon, and very imperceptibly, into the other light of dawn, so that it was daylight before our adventurers were clearly aware of it. At length the clouds were caught here and there by a tinge of reddish yellow amongst the prevailing slate-colour, and glimpses of blue sky began to be visible at intervals. Several large ships were in sight, but, at great distances ; however, it was easy to see with the glass that they were sailing under very little canvas.

It is dreary at all times to be on the deck of a vessel between two and three o'clock in the morning, when the night has been stormy, and the sky is still charged with the jagged clouds of tempest ; but it was especially dreary for Blount and Greenfield, who were still scudding with nothing but their storm-jib, exactly in the opposite direction to that which they would have willingly followed, and who had already begun to feel the physical hardship

of their position. As there was no fire in the galley of the *Alaria*, nor any practical means of lighting one, the boys could neither warm themselves nor prepare anything warm for breakfast, and although they were in the summer holidays, a night of wet and exposure had left them physically very chilly and miserable. They did not lose courage, however, but hoisted a signal of distress, in the hope that some ship-captain might observe it with his telescope, and bear down towards them. The waves were still extremely high, yet the *Alaria* rose and fell with them like a sea-bird that sits upon the water, and as the wind did not increase, but showed signs of abating, for it now lulled itself at intervals, the two boys began to hope that the worst of their perils was over, though it was still a very serious matter to be out on the Atlantic Ocean.

They went on in this way till it was nearly noon, getting as good a breakfast as they could manage under the circumstances, but feeling very tired and sleepy, so that the world of waters seemed hardly real to them, and they felt like people in a dream. A little before noon, however, Harry being at the helm at this time, Greenfield went below, and reappeared on the deck with the sextant in his hands.

"I am going to take an observation," he said; "Calverley put me up to it, and I think I shall be able to find out where we are, for the sun is visible enough behind the clouds."

Tolerably prepared by Calverley's lessons, and aided by some good and clear works on navigation, Greenfield succeeded in taking an observation for latitude, and also in finding the longitude, by a comparison of the time where they were (ascertained by observation) with the Greenwich time given by the chronometer in the cabin. He was

rather long about his calculations, but they came right in the end, and gave very nearly the true result, which was lat. 56.10, long. 12 west. A reference to the map of Europe showed that this was two degrees of longitude to the west of Ireland, and two hundred miles from South Uist, and as much from Isla, which was now very nearly in their own parallel of latitude.

"We're a good long way from the land!" said Harry; "and every minute takes us nearer to the middle of the Atlantic. I wish we could hail a ship! We might then put a crew into the *Alaria*, and feel sure of saving her.' I shouldn't like the Calverleys to lose their new yacht, they were so fond of her."

"And I shouldn't like Mrs. Blount to lose her grandson," said Greenfield; "she is so fond of him!"

Then they both laughed, the first time they had laughed for hours—it was a laugh of returning hope.

"As soon as ever we get to land somewhere, I'll send a telegram to the old lady."

"Better send it to somebody else—to Mr. Masham for instance, for him to bear the good news to her."

"And to think that the Atlantic Telegraph Cable is perhaps only just under us, or only a bit south of us, and we cannot get at it!"

Greenfield was sweeping the horizon with his glass, and said nothing; but seemed for a moment very much interested in something at a distance. At last he exclaimed, "I say, Harry, there's a yacht, a schooner yacht; she's too pretty to be a merchant ship. She's beating to windward, and coming in our direction really, though she seems to be sailing away to the south."

"Must I steer so as to meet her?"

"I rather think the best way will be to keep along

just as we are. She's on her port tack now. When she gets on her starboard tack, she will cross our course again."

The schooner kept a long time on the same tack, but eventually, to the great satisfaction of the crew of the *Alaria*, came round on the other. The *Alaria* herself was going towards the schooner at a considerable speed, so the distance perceptibly lessened.

At last Harry said: "The wind blows from us to them, it would carry sound well, I should think, and we've a brass cannon on board. Let us fire it, and see!"

Neither Harry nor Greenfield had ever fired a cannon in his life, except little toy ones; however, they were nothing daunted by the size of the brass gun on the *Alaria*, which, though small enough relatively to those of a man-of-war, was like a thirty-ton gun in comparison with the tiny artillery of their experience. Greenfield being now at the tiller, Harry immediately set about loading the cannon, having first quickly removed its cover of painted canvas, and went down below for a cartridge. There were blank cartridges and ball cartridges too (only a few of the latter). He selected one with ball, and excused the choice to Greenfield by remarking that it would do no harm to anybody, and would make "a bigger thunge;" by which he meant a louder report.

The "thunge," as he called it, was loud enough, for it astonished the artilleryman himself, and shook the very bones of his head. The man at the helm could not help jumping, and poor little Minimus, who had been confined for his own safety to the little cabin, rushed in alarm to the bolted door, under the impression that the strange voyage had culminated in a catastrophe. The ball tore away through the upper part of two or three distant waves,

then buried itself in the water for ever, and sank slowly through two miles of depth till it got to the bottom. This bit of artillery-practice rather amused Master Harry, so he expressed his conviction that it would be necessary to fire several times, in order to attract the attention of the yacht. In this way he fired five shots, and the consequence was that the schooner, instead of making long tacks, as before, made short ones, that the *Alaria* might not be discouraged. Finally, a puff of smoke came from the side of the schooner, and some seconds afterwards, the report of her gun reached the *Alaria*, but not a loud report, on account of the direction of the wind.

"I think we're all right this time," said Harry, "but it's a pity not to fire off all the cartridges we have. It's very good fun. I wish we'd such a jolly cannon at Bilsbury Grange. What thunges it does make!"

Half an hour later, they were sufficiently near the schooner to examine her in detail. She was a splendid vessel of 180 tons, and her name was the *Estrella*. She came in the most stately manner up into the wind, and just when her tight flat sails were quivering in stays, a boat was lowered, a life-boat, which was rowed in capital form by six smart sailors in the direction of the *Alaria*. This boat was under the command of the *Estrella's* mate, who acted as coxswain. He was very soon on board the *Alaria*, and in answer to his questions, heard a rapid account of the adventure.

"His lordship will be happy to see you young gentlemen on board the *Estrella*," said the mate, "you can row, of course, so we will leave four able seamen on board your yacht to take care of her. They'll be able to manage her. We can take anything you may want in the boat; any clothes, I mean." Harry and Greenfield accordingly went

below for their things, and the portmanteaus were soon transferred to the life-boat, as was Minimus, still in surprise at the succession of adventures, yet not dissatisfied at being taken out of his prison.

On board the yacht, the first person who spoke to them was the owner, a gentleman of short stature, with gray hair, and a keen, thin face, good-natured looking, yet a little imperious. He was dressed very simply, and quite in nautical fashion, in dark-blue pilot cloth. As the mate reported what he had done on board the *Alaria*, and what he had found there, he used the words "my lord" and "your lordship" rather frequently, so it appeared that the old nautical gentleman was a nobleman, but the boys did not hear his name. He received them with the very greatest kindness of manner, said how glad he was to be of use to them, and gave orders that they should have a cabin to themselves. "Have you dry clothes?" he asked, to which the boys answered that they had some in their portmanteaus, so with the help of the valet, and hot water, they soon presented themselves in the state cabin, looking very clean and happy.

Harry had no notion of such a cabin, and indeed, this one had been intended by the owner of the *Estrella* much less for his own pleasure than for the reception of ladies on short pleasure cruises. It was panelled with frames of carved ebony, the panels themselves being covered with yellow satin, on which were embroidered various elegant and fanciful designs in dark purple silk. Tiny niches were reserved in the panelling, and occupied by statuettes in bronze. The sofas were covered with satin, like that upon the walls of this abode of luxury, and lamps were suspended from silver brackets (each of them a work of art) fixed in the carved ebony. All the accommodation on



board the *Estrella* was on a large scale, and her state-saloons were fit for royalty itself.

The owner came very soon into this floating drawing-room, and said, "I've sent two more men and the second mate on board the *Alaria*. They have already got her mainsail up, and she is sailing very close to the wind. She will have no difficulty in keeping company with us, for a cutter always sails closer to the wind than a schooner, and the *Alaria* seems to be an excellent vessel of her kind. But however well the cutter may sail, you two are my prisoners, and must remain with me till we get to Liverpool."

Dinner being announced, they went to a remarkably comfortable state dining-room in carved oak and green velvet, and here they were joined by the captain of the yacht, who had been a lieutenant in the royal navy. There were no guests but our two young friends.

"Now, I want you to tell me the whole story of your adventure more at leisure, but first excuse me if I ask for your names. I see the *Alaria* belongs to Mr. Calverley; are you sons or relatives of his? I should scarcely take you for two brothers." Here the young gentlemen gave a brief account of themselves. When it was finished, their host's countenance was over-clouded by an expression of great sadness. "I wonder," he said, "whether you are related to the Blounts of Bilsbury Grange. I knew the last Mr. Blount, of Bilsbury, to his great misfortune, for he went abroad, at my request, to be of use to me, and both he and his wife unhappily perished in the steamer which was to have brought them back to England."

"I am his only son, my lord," said Harry, "and you must be Earl Wymondeswold."

The Earl looked at Harry with an expression of such astonishment that it appeared to be mingled with dread, as if he had just witnessed something supernatural. Then he held out his hand to Harry, and said, "This gives me at once so much pleasure, and so much pain, that I cannot say more on the subject now. All I feel able to say is, that I have never been aware that your father and mother had left a child behind them in England. I knew that they had none in Spain, and saw, from the list of passengers lost in the Guadalquivir that they had no infant with them. I called on your grandmother at Bilsbury soon after the event. She was at home, but sent to say that she was too unwell to receive me, and I felt that the sight of me could not be otherwise than very painful to her, so I did not call again. Hence my ignorance about you. Had I known you were living, you would not have required this strange adventure to find me."

From that moment, the Earl did not treat Harry as a friend, but as a son. He asked all about his education, and about what he intended to do in after-life. Nothing of all this was lost upon the servant who waited at the little dinner-table, and an hour afterwards it was known to every man in the fore-castle, with the usual exaggerations, so that Harry found himself treated with the very greatest deference by all on board the *Estrella*.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### AT BILSBURY GRANGE AGAIN.

INSTEAD of sailing straight to Liverpool as he had intended, Lord Wymondeswold touched the Irish coast at the telegraph station of Valentia, in order to send despatches to Bilsbury and Bradford and another to the "Times" newspaper, the first specially for Mrs. Blount, the second for the Calverleys wherever they might be.

"I would willingly have sailed to South Uist for your friends," he said, "but I feel convinced they will have left that island in any kind of vessel they could lay hands on, first to seek for you, and afterwards to set others on the search, so it's no use going there. Our telegram to the 'Times' will be copied by other newspapers and reach them whenever they touch at any port. The best thing we can do is simply to take the yachts to Liverpool."

The despatch for Bilsbury was addressed to Mr. Masham. There was no telegraph station there but there was one seven miles off, and a man came galloping up to the Vicarage at twelve o'clock at night when the Vicar was already in bed, but not asleep, for he was thinking of poor Mrs. Blount at the Grange.

The galloping horse stopped under his window, and a

man shouted : "Mr. Masham ! Mr. Masham ! there's a telegram !"

The Vicar was soon at his front door trembling with eagerness to read it, his good old heart thumping away in his chest like a battering ram.

"Get a light ! a light !" he shouted ; but nobody was up, so he fumbled till he found a box of lucifers and lit a candle in his study.

Mrs. Masham was down by this time in a dressing-gown, and the Vicar read aloud—

*"Greenfield and I quite well. Coming home by Liverpool. Yacht saved. Please tell Grandmamma."*

"HARRY."

"Give me my hat. I shall go to the Grange at once !"

"Mind you break the good news gently to her, poor thing ! Oh dear, I *am* so glad. I will go with you, I cannot stay here, but just let me tell our servants first, they will be so glad to know, they were as anxious as ourselves."

The Vicar was not very clever at making up fictitious accounts of things, so when he got to the Grange, and Mrs. Blount came downstairs, he simply said—

"There's news of Harry, and the news is good."

The next thing he did was simply to hand the telegram to the old lady.

If Harry had presented himself in person the sudden joy would have nearly killed her, but very fortunately the telegram was so laconic as to leave room for anxiety yet.

"The despatch is from Ireland," she said, "and they have still to cross all the Irish Sea. We are not sure of Harry's safety yet, till he gets to Liverpool."

This made Mrs. Blount take the news much more coolly than the Vicar had expected. She had got into a *habit* of anxiety and into a state of utter disbelief as to any possible safety on the sea.

However, the next day she was better and more hopeful, and about noon a friend came over specially from a distance with the "Times" newspaper, in which Lord Wyndeswold's telegram was much longer and more explicit. This did Mrs. Blount more good than anything, because it gave reality to the story. The morning following brought a long letter from Harry with a full account of all that the reader already knows, and by the same post there came another letter which the reader may have an opportunity for perusing, as it is not a very long one.

"Yacht Estrella, Valentia, Ireland.

"DEAR MADAM,

"Many years ago I was most involuntarily the cause of a great grief and sorrow to you by having induced your son to go to Spain in my interests, which led to a lamentable misfortune. It is now my happy task to inform you that the accidental meeting of my yacht with that on which your grandson and his friend were adrift on the Atlantic has enabled me to assist them, and this I hope in some measure will make my name in future less painful for you to hear or think of, as it will no longer be exclusively associated with melancholy recollections.

"I presume so far on my recent good-fortune as to propose to bring your grandson to Bilsbury myself if you feel well enough to receive a stranger. I would even intrude upon your hospitality for two or three days, and may plead an invitation from Master Harry.

"There are certain things which I cannot very well write

about, but should like to talk over with you, Mrs. Blount, at your own leisure and convenience.

"I am, dear Madam,

"Sincerely yours,

"WYMONDESWOLD."

The effects of these letters was just the very best which could have been devised for Mrs. Blount, as they gave her plenty to do in the interval before Harry's return. She set about putting the Grange in such a condition as to give it quite a festive appearance. All the covers were taken off the chairs, all the bedrooms were put in order to receive guests, and both Mrs. Blount and the servants worked as hard as they possibly could.

Meanwhile our friends the Calverleys, not having seen or heard anything about the *Alaria* (they had sailed too far north to meet with her), returned to Oban in great distress of mind, but found the "Times" telegram there, and came southwards as fast as they could. On arriving in Liverpool they found the *Estrella* and *Alaria*, moored side by side, but the earl and his guests had already left for Yorkshire.

The *Alaria* was in perfect condition, as the little crew from the *Estrella* had put everything in that unexceptionable state of order which is only to be found on board a crack yacht or a man-of-war. The Calverleys, however, did not remain on the *Alaria* more than an hour, but left her in charge of their own sailors, and then started at once for Bilsbury Grange.

It was many a year since the old house had looked so gay as it did on the evening of Harry's return. He came into the village at five o'clock, and had a sort of public reception there, part of which was owing to the presence

of the Earl, one of the largest proprietors in the neighbourhood, and rarely seen by his tenantry. The Vicar, in the joy of his heart, set the village bells ringing, and a flag was hoisted on the church steeple. The tenants had made an arch of greenery at the entrance to the private carriage-drive, which was ornamented with flowers, and looked extremely pretty in the warm evening sunshine. Harry's eyes had been so much accustomed of late to the wildest scenery of the rocky western islands, and to the desolate ocean, that he could not help saying to the Earl, "How beautiful this part of Yorkshire looks after the Hebrides and the Atlantic! I never knew before what a charming country this is."

"I was just thinking the same," said Lord Wymondeswold, "it is a rich and peaceful land, better fitted for human habitation than many places that strike us more when we are travelling. Bilsbury is a better place to live in than the Isle of Skye."

"But if the western islands could be floated down seven or eight degrees of latitude so as to have a better climate and plenty of trees, how jolly they would be! It is a great pity they are in such a bad situation with all that wonderful scenery."

Just now the carriage rolled along the smooth gravel.

"You must take my place, Blount," said the Earl. "You will be nearer to the door, and nearer to Mrs. Blount when she comes to meet you." They were alone in the carriage, for Greenfield had gone to Bradford.

Mrs. Blount was standing on the steps of the entrance, and saw but one object. Harry was out of the carriage before she could reach it, and contrarily to his usual custom gave her two or three hearty kisses notwithstanding the publicity of the situation. Minimus had bounced out

of the carriage at the same time with his young master, and was doing all in his power to attract Mrs. Blount's attention. Once satisfied in this respect he ran helter-skelter into the house sniffing and smelling along the passages.

Mrs. Blount welcomed the Earl rather ceremoniously, but at the same time thanked him for his kindness to Harry, and so this little scene of the reception ended, when Harry had shaken hands with the Mashams, and spoken to the servants.

It had been decided by Mrs. Blount that no one but the Mashams was to be invited that evening, so they had a quiet little dinner in the old familiar room. The lady of Bilsbury Grange was the last person in the world to make a vulgar fuss about a lord, so the dinner was not much more elaborate than at other times when they had a little company. The maid-servants waited as usual, and the only difference perceptible even to the vigilant eye of Mrs. Masham was a more abundant display of old plate, in which the Blounts, like many other old families in the north of England, were rich from long accumulation. It is very unnecessary to repeat the table-talk, which was all about incidents already known in detail to the reader. Lord Wymondeswold explained that when he met with the Alaria he was returning from America, where he had been travelling with friends who had gone out with him in his yacht, but had continued their travels whilst he returned alone.

"I am rather a solitary man," he said, "I have no near relation, and was never married, so this makes me a wanderer."

"You must have sailed immense distances in your yacht altogether," said Harry.



"Yes, I have a log-book, which contains the record of many a day's sailing in all known oceans. I delight in the sea."

Poor Mrs. Blount looked grave. She could not help thinking what a pity it was that by some strange fatality each new friend of Harry's should appear destined to lead him upon the element she dreaded, and with which she had no association but an old sorrow and a recent anxiety.

"It is so jolly is yachting, grandmamma!" said Harry, with the thoughtlessness of youth. "Some day, I should like to have a yacht of my own, a little five-tonner to begin with. William Calverley began so."

"I wonder," Mrs. Blount answered with a shade of bitterness, not usual with her, "that when you have been so recently delivered from a great peril, you can think so lightly of incurring such risks again!"

"We are made so," the Earl answered for Harry. "Men are made to enjoy risk and danger, and it is well for them that they should have the power of doing so, for if they had not they would still have the bitter without the sweet, the peril without the noble excitement which accompanies it, and gives it a positive attraction. Harry and his young friend both conducted themselves with great judgment when they were left alone upon the *Alaria*, and it is probable that they would have acted much less judiciously if they had been afraid. But I strongly suspect that they secretly enjoyed the whole adventure, and liked to feel themselves put on their own resources in a situation of real peril."

"I never enjoyed anything so much in my life!" said Harry.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### A MORNING CONFERENCE.

THE next morning the Earl contrived to have a little private conference with Mrs. Blount in the garden, whilst Harry was out in the fields.

"Since I met with your boy," he said, in a tone which pleased and interested the old lady exceedingly, "I have felt a new consolation as to that unhappy event which occurred fifteen years ago, for now it seems possible for me to do something which may show my sense that some degree of responsibility has fallen upon me through that event."

"The fate of my poor son and daughter was not due to any fault or negligence of yours, my lord—they took the public steamer, and the steamer was lost. You would have prevented it if you could have known beforehand that there was any especial risk."

"Yes, that is quite true, and it is the way I have reasoned with myself; but without indulging in any exaggerated or morbid feelings on the subject, I see that the accident which occurred leaves me an inheritance of responsibility, just as another accidental death might have left me an inheritance of land or money. I am free no doubt, morally, to accept this inheritance or to decline it.

I could decline it without incurring blame, without even incurring the blame of my own conscience, and still something within me makes me clearly aware that such a course, though blameless, would not be the best. The facts are that this boy has been left an orphan, because his father and mother quitted their own home to be of use to me. Mr. Blount did not ask for the post, it was I who begged him to accept it, it was I who suggested that his wife might accompany him."

"All that you did was full of kindness and consideration. My son was glad to go, and he enjoyed the duties of his situation in Spain. I well remember how happy he was about it."

"Men are generally happy when very actively employed in work which they are perfectly competent to perform. But now let me come from the past to the present. It is evident that your grandson has not hitherto suffered in his education from the absence of a father's guidance. He is as well advanced as boys of his age ever need be, and he is full of courage and manliness, which I hope he may never diminish hereafter by too much poring over books. Still there is a time of life when a young man greatly needs the close and watchful friendship of an older man who has had a considerable experience of the world. It is the father who generally supplies this, or who ought to supply it, but your boy has no father. Now if you will permit me, I will accept the duties of such a situation relatively to your son, and I will carefully and conscientiously fulfil them."

Mrs. Blount was much too sensible a woman not to see a great objection to this, however much she felt obliged by Lord Wymondeswold's kindness.

"You are indeed good to Harry," she said, "and I have

no doubt whatever that you would perform what you promise with the most scrupulous fidelity, but there are reasons against it which seem insuperable. The strongest reason is the enormous difference of position. I don't think it would be good for Harry to get accustomed to habits of luxury and expense, which would be entirely beyond his very limited means. People are always happiest when they live contentedly in their own position. It is not a good thing, for young people especially, to be too much in great houses unless they are sure to have great houses of their own. Even already, I can see an effect upon Harry's mind, which I shall not be able to counteract without some difficulty. He has been yachting with Mr. Calverley and your lordship, and now he talks of setting up a yacht of his own. I would much rather hear him talk of entering some active profession. It would certainly not be doing Harry a service to accustom him to a manner of living which would be utterly beyond his means."

In saying this, which she did with great decision and energy, Mrs. Blount was in truth actuated in part by a motive which was entirely unsuspected by herself. Without knowing it, she was just a little jealous of the increasing influence which other people were beginning to exercise over Harry, and did not feel quite disposed to let Lord Wymondeswold have his own way with the boy, and put himself into the situation of his father. The Earl, who had a keen insight into human nature, immediately became aware of this, and saw where the real difficulty lay, but he trusted to his own tact and management for the means of overcoming it.

"You will have a difficulty, Mrs. Blount, in keeping Harry in a fixed position. It is said that we must either advance or decline in knowledge, and so it is with a man's

position in society. I know exactly what Harry's means will be, for he told me, and I think that the position he inherits, though apparently very nice and pleasant, is not likely to be satisfactory."

"His father found it a very happy position."

"His father was an energetic agriculturist, who was devoted to farming as a profession. Your grandson has not the slightest turn for agriculture, and says he will always let his land. Now, what is he to do? He will have £800 a-year, just enough to make the early gains of a profession seem ridiculously small to him, yet not enough to occupy his mind in the direction of his own affairs. The men who succeed in professions are almost always poor when they begin. Harry will never go through the drudgery of an attorney's office, or the unremitting labour and long waiting which are necessary to success at the bar."

"I had hoped that he might go into the Church."

"The Church requires more and more a special vocation in these times, and Harry's tendencies seem to be towards the life of an active layman. I asked him whether he would like the Church, as a profession, and he said he did not feel himself naturally adapted for it; so it is needless to urge him in that direction."

"How difficult it is to choose an occupation for him!"

"In my opinion, Mrs. Blount, he will never go into any profession at all. His moderate competency will be the cause of that, and, perhaps too, his affection for Bilsbury Grange. He told me he would rather live on his own little income at Bilsbury, than on ten times as much in London. Now it is very difficult to pursue a profession at Bilsbury Grange, unless it were literature, and Harry has not the slightest turn for literary pursuits."

"Evidently, in your opinion, my lord, he is fit for nothing whatever."

"It is his position which unfits him. He might have done admirably in any one of many occupations, had he started in life with eighty pounds a-year, instead of eight hundred."

All this had been already vaguely felt by Mrs. Blount, but now that it was stated so forcibly by the Earl, she saw the truth of it much more clearly. She had seen obstacles through a mist; now the mist was cleared away, and the obstacles, instead of vanishing, looked far harder and more substantial. Mrs. Blount was now rapidly coming round to the point, where the Earl intended her to come, and at length she asked the question he intended her to ask.

"Then what would you propose to do with him?"

"Well, you know I have a theory that a position will either improve or deteriorate, and I believe that most people have the choice between the two. Now suppose that it were decided that Harry's position should be improved?"

"This is vague, my lord. I am at a loss to see how it is to be done."

"I would willingly take the responsibility of that."

"Do you mean that you would give him money? I should not like him to accept it. He may not be rich, but he has enough to live upon, without incurring obligations of any kind."

Mrs. Blount's spirit of independence was very difficult to contend against, but the Earl was very persistent, in his gentle way.

"I will give him no money, if you object to it, but you could not, without doing him a wrong, decline a benefit to him which would come in another form. My property

in the neighbourhood of Bilsbury is detached from my other estates, and is not entailed upon my heir, who, as you know, is a very distant relation. I have a perfect right to leave this Bilsbury property to whom I please, and it would be agreeable to me to think that it would be Harry's some day. You cannot prevent me from leaving it to him, and I hope you will not try, but just let the matter be settled so. Harry would then possess all the land which his father farmed, and more besides."

Mrs. Blount could not refuse this ; indeed, her refusal would have been of no use. So she thanked the Earl for his good intentions. This was as much as he expected for the present, and he felt satisfied with his morning's work ; but he had determined that everybody should know of his decision, in order that Harry's future position might be clearly defined.

That evening there was a great dinner at the Grange, the greatest dinner that had been given there for many a year. The two Calverleys had arrived, Dr. Templeman had been invited, Mr. and Miss Healaugh had come from Overblow, and, by Mrs. Blount's special request, had brought Alice with them. Our friend Greenfield, too, had come from Bradford ; and there were one or two squires from the immediate neighbourhood of Bilsbury, with whom our history has no concern. This was quite a sufficiently large public for Lord Wymondeswold's purpose, so, when dessert was on the table, he got upon its legs, and made a speech under pretext of proposing Harry's health, but, in reality, to let those present, and through them the world outside, know the decision he had taken. After alluding in a most touching and delicate way to the loss of the Guadalquivir, he spoke, with much ease and simplicity, of his own meeting with the Alaria, warmly

praising the prudent manner in which Harry and Greenfield had conducted themselves under the circumstances; and congratulating Mr. Calverley that his yacht had been in such good hands. Then he said he was a lonely and childless old man, who had little or nothing to look forward to in this world, and that it seemed as if Harry had been sent to him to fill a place which had long been vacant in his heart; that he had obtained Mrs. Blount's permission to establish himself in a sort of paternal relation to Harry, in order that the boy, on entrance into life, might not be without such friendly counsel and assistance as a young man always needed. Finally, he came to the question of the property, played about it in a delicate way for a minute or two, and sat down at last, having left the impression on the mind of his audience, that it was the most natural and proper thing in the world that Harry, in due course of time, should succeed to his Billsbury estate.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### CONCLUSION.

THE moderate Bilsbury festivities were very soon over, and after that Harry's life began to enter into a new phase, which it is not a part of our plan to follow, at least in detail. We did not intend to narrate the history of his manhood, but merely some passages in his boyish career, which were of importance, because they produced results which affected his future. Both the labours and the amusements of a boy bring him into contact with people who have an influence over all his life, whether he sees much of them afterwards or not. Thus it happened, that although Harry saw little or nothing, after leaving Brambleby, of such companions as Selby and Wade, they had an influence upon him by driving him to seek the society of more congenial schoolfellows, and compelling him to make friends of them. His amusements in the field and at sea had brought him into contact with Mr. Healaugh, with William Calverley, and finally with Lord Wymondeswold, and thus the circle of his horizon, once so narrow, had extended itself considerably. The rest of his history, so far as the reader may care to know it, may be sketched in a few words. He went to read at Sudenham with Dr. Templeman, and, after that, to Oxford; but during his

residence at Sudenham it happened that Alice Healaugh came often to stay with her aunt, and remained there for several weeks at a time, as the Squire had found it utterly impossible to manage about a governess. After that, all Harry's schemes for the future included a domestic picture, of which Miss Alice was the presiding genius, and from the friendly feeling of Squire Healaugh towards our hero, not to speak of the, at least equally favourable disposition of the young lady herself, it is probable that Harry was not too presumptuous in these little schemes of his.

I may add with reference to one of his schoofellows, of whom we heard a good deal in the earlier part of this history, that James Wade, on arriving at man's estate, applied for the tenancy of Bilsbury farm, then vacant, and added to it, in consequence of Harry's recommendation, five hundred acres from the Wymondeswold estate. Here he was in his right place, always acted quite honourably towards the owners of the soil, and improved the land considerably.

Mrs. Blount is alive yet, and in good health, so is Mr. Healaugh, but Lord Wymondeswold died last summer of a fever, caught in the West Indies when out yachting with the *Estrella*. He had shown the most solicitous and fatherly interest in Harry ever since they first met, and his promises were more than fulfilled in his will. The voyage in the *Alaria* was the first, but not the last, of Harry's yachting expeditions. When he began yachting on his own account he acted on William Calverley's recommendation and began on a very small scale with *Greenfield* and a boy, but afterwards he purchased the *Alaria* herself, when the Captain had a desire to realize some fancied improvements in a new vessel.

Dr. Templeman's marriage turned out much better than might have been expected from the hasty manner in which it was first decided upon. His wife was an excellent manager, but at Sudenham rectory the doctor was *not* the "Head Master." He had to bend his will to a higher authority, and did so with remarkable meekness, considering how little he had been accustomed to submission. Fortunately for Harry Mrs. Templeman took a great fancy to him and exercised her influence, which was considerable, in his favour.

The only reflection that I feel inclined to make with reference to Harry Blount's career was completely expressed by Mr. Masham to his wife one evening as they sat together by their fire-side after Harry, then an Oxford man, had just left them. "It seems to me," said Mr. Masham, "that Harry's life has been made only *too* easy for him by so many different kinds of good fortune, and the wonder is that it has not spoiled him. Such sunny prosperity as his is harder to bear in a right spirit than the clouds of an every-day life. I don't think that, if I had a son, I should wish for him so much of what is called good luck. I certainly would never pray for it. But as Harry is so situated I pray that he may never neglect a duty and never give himself up to a round of mere amusement, even when it is such a healthy and manly amusement as yachting, which he is so passionately fond of. I wish sometimes he had been in the navy; he might then have combined the enjoyment of the sea with the service of his country."

"We can none of us tell who serves his country best," said Mrs. Masham; "Harry's life may be a blessing to others yet, for he has a fine spirit and a kindly heart."

A gentleman may serve his country in his own village, and Bilsbury will look a deal brighter when Harry and Alice come to settle permanently at the Grange."

THE END.

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